WOLVERINE

#140

DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT'S

COMICS REVIEW

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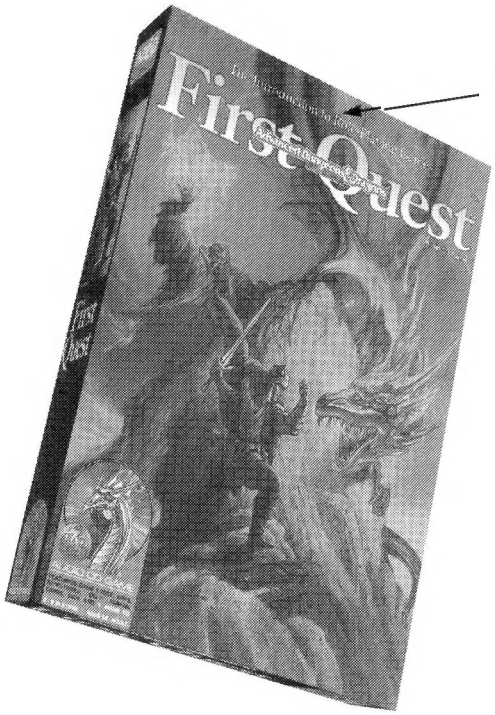

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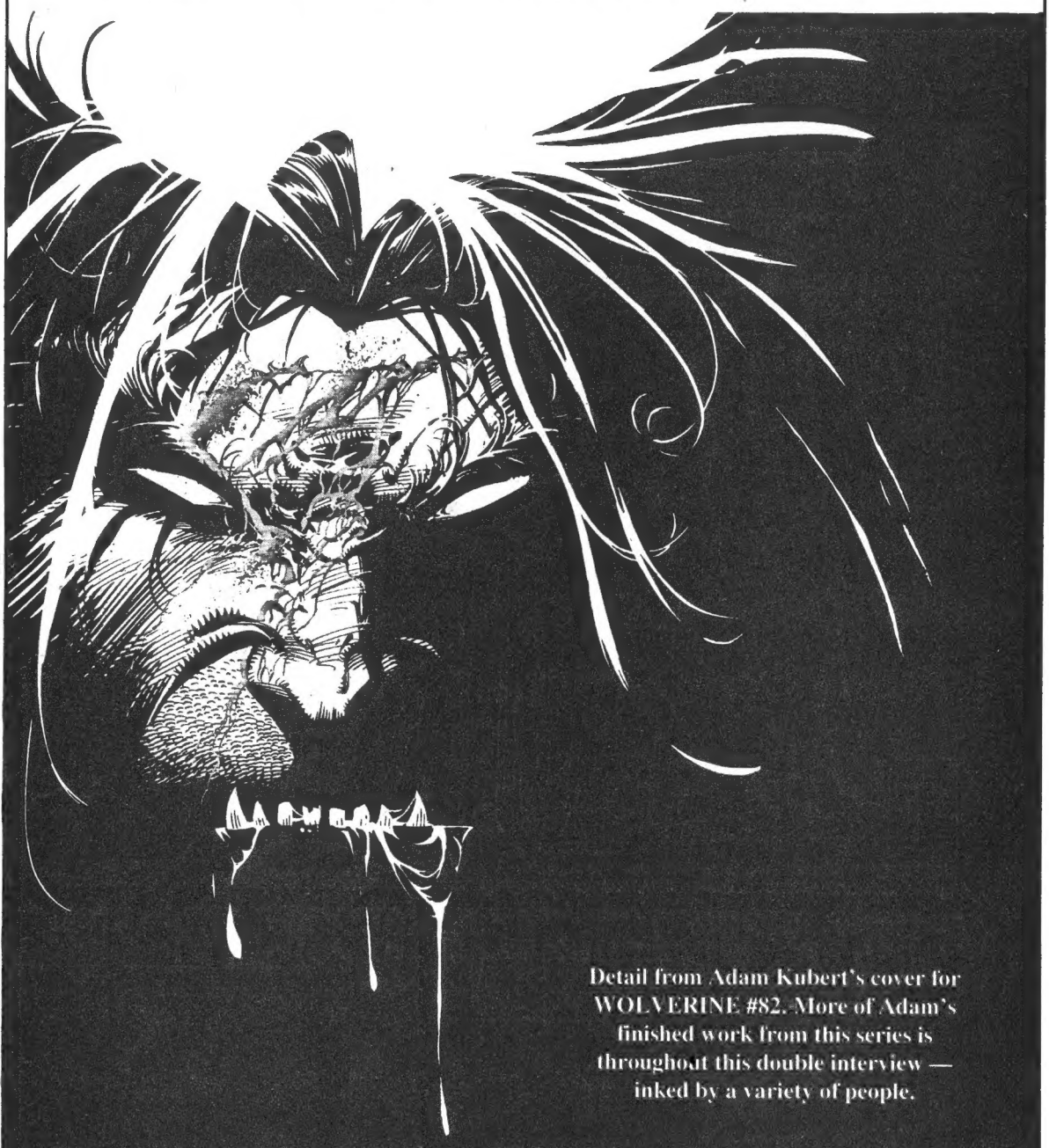
"I work from Larry's plot. He leaves me a

SPOTLIGHT:



Detail from Adam Kubert's cover for WOLVERINE #82. More of Adam's finished work from this series is throughout this double interview — inked by a variety of people.

WOLVERINE

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lot of room to stretch out and interpret it."

WOLVERINE wouldn't be one of the hottest titles today if it weren't for the great team of Larry Hama and Adam Kubert. Larry began his career as an artist and has most recently been writing WOLVERINE and G.I.JOE for Marvel; both titles have huge casts of characters and he keeps them flowing smoothly. Adam, a member of the extremely talented Kubert family (Joe's his dad and Andy's his brother) has brought vitality and life to the pages of WOLVERINE and other Marvel comics. His ability to convey moods is amazing. Sandra Dincher had the chance to talk with both of them together about what lies ahead for Logan . . .

SANDRA DINCHER: *Let's talk about the hottest mutant — Wolverine. Tell me about how the two of you interact to produce the great stories you come up with every month.*

ADAM KUBERT: Well, Larry comes up with the great stories. I draw the great stories. It originates on Larry's computer.

SANDRA: *Is that full-script, or just a plot outline?*

ADAM: I work from Larry's plot. His stories are — I'm not saying this just because he's on the other line there — his stories are excellent. He leaves me a lot of room to stretch out and interpret it.

SANDRA: *Larry?*

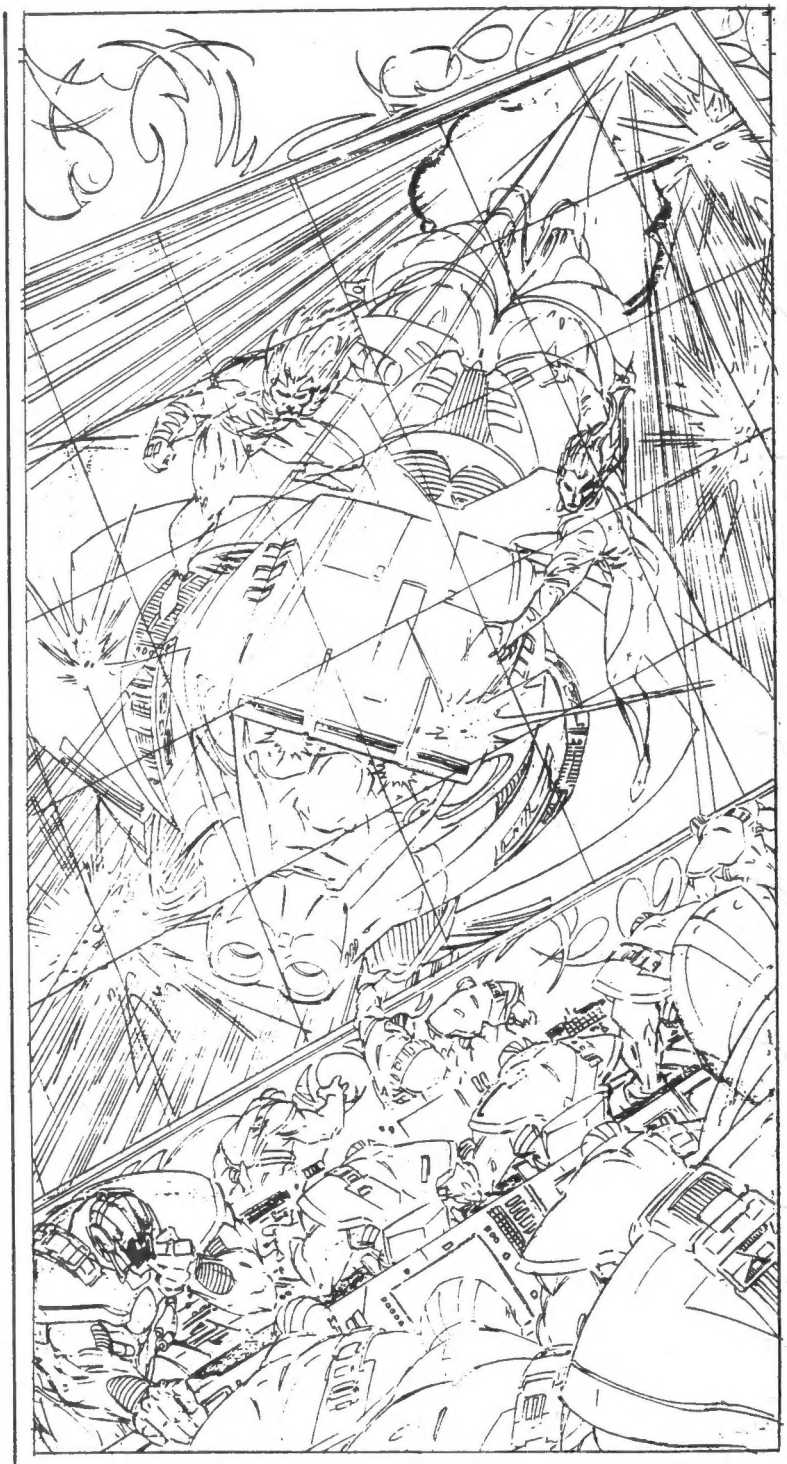
LARRY HAMA: It's a cooperative medium. I always try to find out from the artists I work with what they want to draw, or what they like to draw, or *how* they like to draw. I try to do the types of stories that they're going to like to do, because it's to all of our benefits. If *we* don't have fun doing this, then no one else is going to have fun reading it. So we have to make it as interesting and as fun and as exciting to us as we can. We have to like this stuff; otherwise there's no sense in doing it.

SANDRA: *Have you ever found an instance where, from your plot, Adam has introduced something that added a new dimension to a story, or a little twist that you then turned into a plot thread?*

LARRY: All the time! That's one thing about somebody like Adam, who's really terrific, and a learning sponge. He works with new stuff constantly, and it's constantly mutating.

SANDRA: *So, you're saying Adam Kubert is a mutant?*

LARRY: No pun intended! The thing is, that's what makes his stuff good, and interesting. He's always trying to figure out a new way to do things, and incorporating it. You have to do that. You have to keep evolving, or else you just stagnate.



Here and throughout: various pencils from Marvel's WEAPON X #1 series — drawn by Adam Kubert.

ADAM: What I try to do — I try to make it fun for *me*. I'll take the story and if it's a situation that's not dramatic, I'll try to turn that into something that makes it fun for me to do it. Like Larry said, if it's fun for me I'll get into it more and I won't get bored. I enjoy doing it that way.

"Any inker can either make or break an illustration."

SANDRA: *That's great.*

LARRY: It's very easy to get bored doing some of this stuff. One of the reasons I turned to writing is that I was getting bored doing some of the plots I was getting, when I was drawing.

SANDRA: *Does Mark Farmer, your inker, ever have an opportunity to say, "Hey, by the way, I feel like inking tanks this week?"*

ADAM: Not really.

SANDRA: (Laughter.) *He's out of the loop?*

ADAM: Not out of the loop. I talk to him at least a couple of times a month. I guess he's out of the *story* loop. But he's absolutely not out of the *creative* loop, because I feel that he brings a lot to the art — as any inker does. Any inker can either make or break an illustration.

IT'S PROBABLY A HEAP MORE'N THOSE TWO DOGGIN' MY TRAIL HAVE HAD FOR WEEKS.
BAD WAY TO GO -- WALKIN' INTO THE COLD WHITE NOWHERE WITH EMPTINESS GNAWIN' YER GUT...
ALMOST FEEL SORRY FOR 'EM...
...BUT NOT QUITE.

LARRY: It's not just that. There's more to it. I think that the colorist and the letterer are real, integral, important parts of the loop also.

ADAM: Absolutely. Yeah.

LARRY: The lettering is *real* important! *(Laughter.)* Especially the sound effects and display lettering and all that stuff — unique balloon shapes and so on and so forth.

And the coloring — now that the coloring has gotten more complex, and we're going into computer coloring, the coloring is a whole art form in itself.

ADAM: Uh-huh. If you do a good drawing, the coloring can easily kill it — no matter how fail-safe an illustration is.

SANDRA: *There's nothing more distracting than a boot that's the wrong color.*

ADAM: Yeah — and there's nothing more distracting than doing some kind of dramatic lighting that's colored wrong.

LARRY: I think that when we have the creative conferences, these other input people should be included in it. If you're going to try to do a whole new cross-over, let's say, I think it might be important to bring in the colorists. Because there are whole new processes and if you show a whole new special effect — hey, the colorists can come in and say "We're able to do *this* now," and the penciller can go, "Okay, that's something that I can work my pencils towards, so that the colorist can have something to *do* it with." But if you don't have that interface, if you don't have that communication, then we're all working at our own purposes.

SANDRA: *And you could cross purposes?*

LARRY: Exactly. The more communication there is between all the involved parties, I think, the better.

SANDRA: *The name that hasn't gotten mentioned here yet is Bob Harras, the editor.*

LARRY: Well, he's the glue that holds it all together!

SANDRA: *He's juggling quite a few X-books here. What role does he play?*

LARRY: Major! I mean, he is the guy that — if this was a film, he's the director, sort of a producer/director.

SANDRA: *Tom DeFalco thinks he's the producer.*

LARRY: The producer's the guy who signs the vouchers.

"I have a dictionary by me, and once in a while

ADAM: I think Bob's the most important guy. Because he's the one who puts all the creative talents together. He makes sure the continuity of the characters within the book and outside the book remain consistent. It's his neck on the line every time a book comes out. He's responsible.

LARRY: And it's his eye. It's *his eye* that's the most important. And his taste. He's the guy that sits there and makes the decision, "Well, I think the way this looks is going to go over," or "I think this type of storytelling is what's out there." He's got a real finger on the *Zeitgeist*, is what it is.

ADAM: The Zeitgeist?

SANDRA: *He likes that name — Larry named a doctor who created weaponry in G.I. JOE "Doctor Zeitgeist."*

ADAM: A well-known trivia fact?

LARRY: Gee, I'd even forgotten that.

SANDRA: *I remember, because I just nearly fell over when I saw it.*

ADAM: I have a dictionary by me, and once in a while I have to go through and look up a word that Larry writes in the plot, so I can understand it.

LARRY: I try to make a plot as entertaining as possible. There are a lot of people who think in terms of writing a plot as just being bare-bones description. But I find that it's my job as the writer to write the plot in such a way that it excites the penciller. If it's really rip-snorting, and it *reads* well — and he can have fun *reading* it, as a plot — then he or she is more likely to put a little more oomph into it when it comes down to drawing it.

ADAM: I'll tell you, one of the most helpful things that you did for me, Larry — Larry provides a lot of reference for the artist, and that's more than helpful. That's not the word I'm looking for. It's —

SANDRA: *A life saver?*

ADAM: No, not a life saver — a *time* saver. He provided me one time with a videotape of a movie. This was the atmosphere of the story he was writing. The atmosphere of the tape was a misty area. It was unbelievably helpful in understanding what he was looking for. He even cued it up to the area of the tape, so I didn't have to — it was a subtitled Japanese movie, so I didn't have to watch through the whole movie to understand what he was looking for. It really helped me in understanding what he was looking for in the story.

I think I have some reference books from Larry still sitting here.

SANDRA: *Let's talk about Wolverine for a while. Logan is what he's called. Big question: Is that his first name, his last name, or a nickname?*

LARRY: There are whole aspects of the Logan lore that should really not be bandied about. There's so much of the mystery that's been sort of evaporated that I think it's sort of important to keep whatever is left fairly intact.

SANDRA: *How old is he?*

PHONE SYSTEM: Click click.

LARRY: I'm expecting this call. Let me click off and tell the guy to call back.

SANDRA: *Okay, I'll talk to Adam for a while. We'll just pretend Larry's out of the room for a few minutes. How are things with you?*

ADAM: Good.

SANDRA: *How's your dad and your brother?*

ADAM: They're doing good.

SANDRA: *The Kubert family clan is producing massive quantities of grand art?*

ADAM: Yep.

SANDRA: *Got any hot new projects coming up?*

ADAM: I have a possibility of doing a trading card set along with Andy and my dad.

SANDRA: *Really! A Kubert collection?*

ADAM: Yep. It's not signed, sealed and delivered yet, but it's as close as 95% there.

SANDRA: *That's great!*

LARRY: What's 95% there?

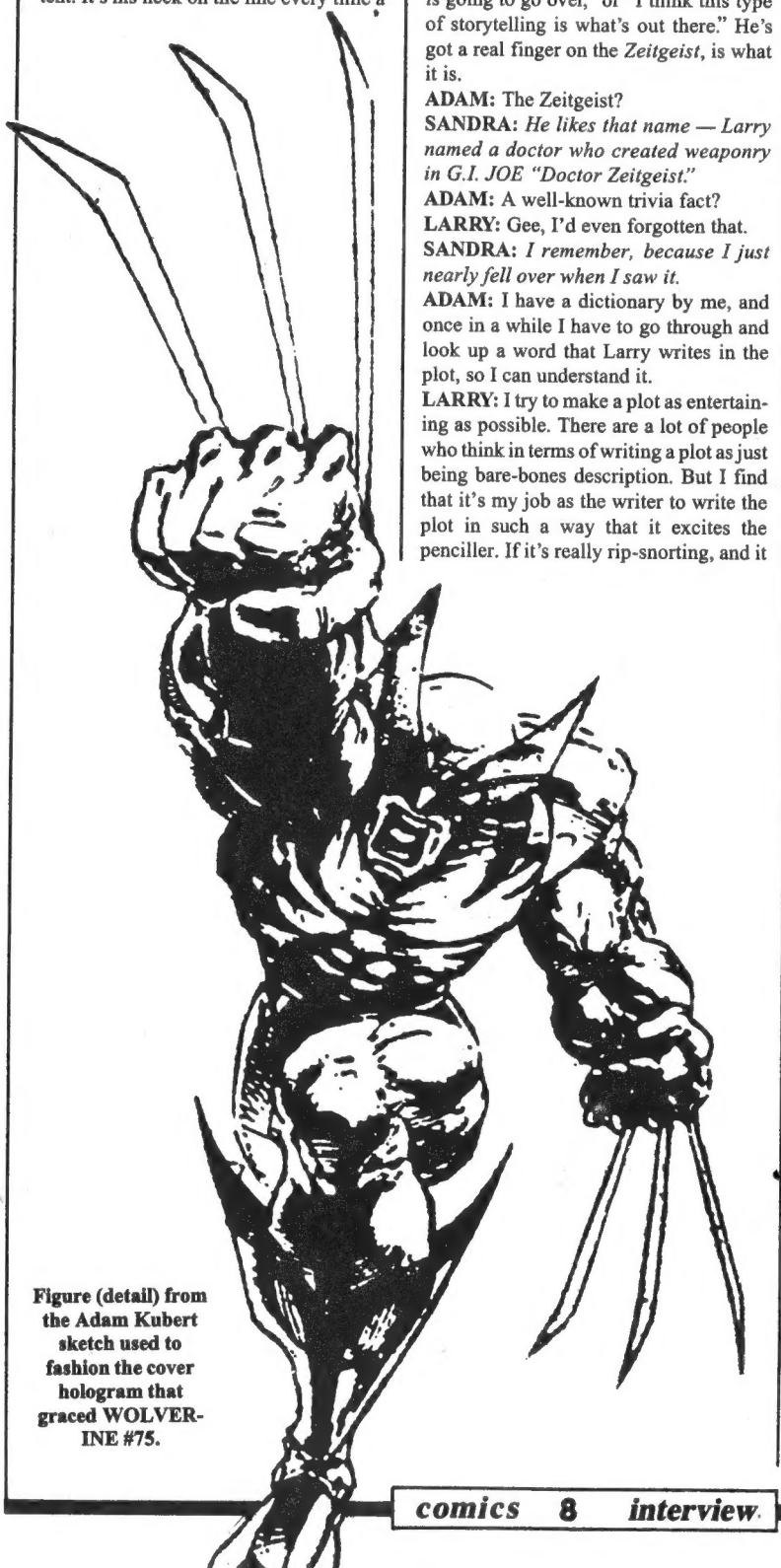


Figure (detail) from the Adam Kubert sketch used to fashion the cover hologram that graced WOLVERINE #75.

I look up a word that Larry writes in the plot."

Special "inkers" note: Adam's dad inked these panels from WOLVERINE's 82nd issue — Joe really took over these panels!

ADAM: Andy, my dad and I are doing an X-Men trading card set.

LARRY: Oh, right.

ADAM: I was just saying, the contracts aren't signed but that's about all that has to be done at this point.

SANDRA: *Larry, does that sound like something you'd want?*

LARRY: Me?

SANDRA: *I'd want it.*

LARRY: Oh. Well, I sure would want it. Great stuff!

That was somebody else wanting to interview me.

SANDRA: *Well, good thing I got here first!*

I would like, one at a time, for your personal views of "Who is Logan/Wolverine?" What is he like? If you sat down and had a beer with him — you know, is he a Democrat or a Republican? What do you think? Let's start with Larry.

LARRY: That's extremely difficult — I mean, to sum up who a character is, a character that you find in a comic, is — let me backtrack here, and explain that.

The thing about the characters you know, from reading incremental stories, is that your knowledge of them is spread out over a long period of time. What you know about Logan, what you know about The Fantastic Four, or Spider-Man, is stuff that you've accumulated over many, many, many issues. Little bits and pieces, here and there. It's something that — that's what gives these long-term characters an incredible depth, more than a character that you're introduced to in the first 15 minutes of a movie and then you see this character for, like, 90 minutes on screen. You're talking about a much more in-depth absorption of information.

I don't know if I made that very clear.

SANDRA: *Yeah — you did. You didn't answer the question, but —*

LARRY: Well, basically, he's — you know, he's — well, it's sort of like somebody saying, "Hey, tell me about the character of Charlie Brown or Linus or Lucy in PEANUTS." You've been reading these strips for 20-something years, and know so much information about these characters that it would take pages and pages and pages.

Basically, I think Wolverine is not the kind of guy that it would be easy to sit down in a bar with and have a beer with, because he's not all that talkative.

SANDRA: *You could sit down next to him, and you could drink a beer, and he could drink a beer, but he wouldn't talk to you?*

ADAM: Right.

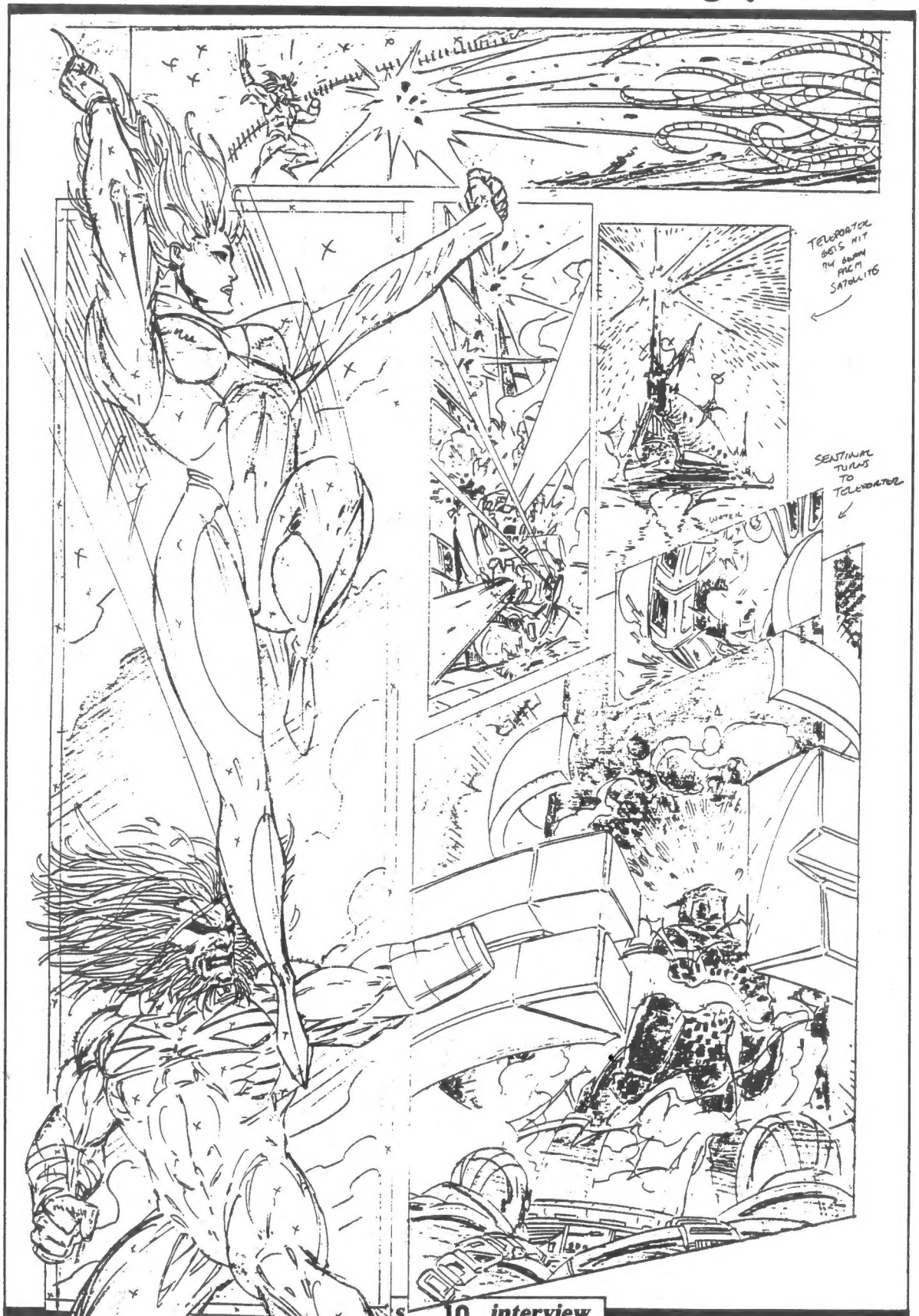
LARRY: He's more of a stare-at-the-wall type of guy.

ADAM: And *that* says a lot about the character.

LARRY: Yeah. He finds it very difficult to be all that open with other people. And he has a lot of pent-up angers and things. And he's got all these problems with how he feels about himself — how he feels about his violent edge, and how he feels about his sort of animal nature. And these are the very interesting things about him — but in a real person, I think they would, uh —

ADAM: *(Laughter.)* Make for a difficult

"It's difficult to make a short, muscular guy not look



like a short, fat guy. People have drawn him 6 feet tall."

relationship!

SANDRA: *Makes sense. Adam, what do you think?*

ADAM: Well, the first thing that comes to my mind is, I think he's a really *cool* character. He's a cool character to draw, and when he gets into certain situations, when Larry puts him in situations, at that point — it's kind of weird, but I can figure out his body language and his emotional aspect at that point.

I don't know. I can figure out how to do it, but it's difficult to describe. If that answers your question.

I mean — he's got six claws. He's cool, y'know. *(Laughter.)*

LARRY: And he's five-foot-three.

SANDRA: *Okay, let's talk about that. He's short. Do you have trouble keeping the proportion between his stature —*

ADAM: Yes. It's difficult. It's difficult to make a short, muscular guy not look like a short, fat guy. Or stupid, or comical. A lot of people have drawn him six feet tall, and that's not really the character.

No, it *is* difficult, and I find myself always double-checking and trying to get it right. Sometimes I *don't* get it right, but I'm aware of it. How tall is he? About five-three?

LARRY: Yeah, he's about five-three, five-four.

ADAM: That's short! I mean, that's really *short!*

SANDRA: *Hey, I'm five-one! Come on!*

ADAM: Well, it's not *that* short! *(Laughter.)*

Yeah, it *is* difficult keeping it in proportion.

SANDRA: *Well, frequently you have situations that Larry has written, where you see him standing and talking to a woman, who's in high heels, and already taller than he is — and it's really kind of interesting.*

ADAM: It makes good character relationships. There's a lot of visual effects that go along with a character that size.

You develop this *thing* about characters that you have to live with. If you work with a character, we have to live with this character ten, twelve hours a day —

LARRY: You'd *better* like him!

ADAM: That's right! In drawing him, a lot of times you have to feel — I mean, the drawing comes out of *me*. I have to feel how he would feel, how he feels in a certain situation. And I have to put myself — this might sound corny, but I have to put myself in his place.

LARRY: Wear the shoes, as we call it.

ADAM: Yes. And figure out either a gesture or a position or emotion or reaction or whatever to a particular situation.

"We're in a commercial field. Part of that is making

SANDRA: *Here's a real simple question. Why are we back in the yellow and blue costume?*

ADAM: Larry?

LARRY: I *like* it. *(Laughter.)*

ADAM: There's a lot of considerations. Yellow and blue are primary colors. They're X-Men colors.

LARRY: They're bright. They look really great on a page, especially with the process. At the time that we switched over from the orange — the problem with orange and brown is that they're not primary colors. They're very *muddy* colors. And before we switched to the new coloring process and the better paper, he just looked like mud on the page. And it was very difficult to color stuff with that combination of colors on him.

ADAM: And yellow and blue separates a lot better, from almost any background you can put him on.

LARRY: Yes, absolutely.

SANDRA: *Well, I was just thinking in terms of — I think of him as a stalker, an animal blending in with his environment. I mean, blue and yellow doesn't blend in with anything. But you're right. I'm sure it looks better.*

ADAM: But a lot of the critters out there you want to stalk are color-blind. The disruption pattern of the stripes is a much better camouflage in most environments than anything else.

SANDRA: *That's a good point. I was just afraid it had something to do with that cartoon show.*

LARRY: No, really, it has nothing to do with somebody else's decision on that. It

Adam: ". . . Six feet tall, that's not really the character." Here, and next few pages, are examples of other pencillers' interpretations of Wolverine. Below, John Buscema pencils from issue #16. Next page: From MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #48 (one of a 3-part story), Erik Larsen's version in graphite — with Spidey, too!

it dramatic, interesting and fun to look at and read."

has to do with editorial and creative people going, "Hey, this is what we like." I like the look of the blue and yellow costume. I don't know about Adam. I think he does, too.

ADAM: Yeah, I like it a lot. I've never drawn him in the brown costume, so I can't really judge that.

SANDRA: *So, why does he have spikes coming out of the tops of his boots?*

I mean, we're bashing his costume here, so . . . is it, again, just because it looks cool?

LARRY: It's a fashion statement, yeah. It's cool.

SANDRA: *Is it the same reason why Rogue's belt doesn't fit?*

ADAM: Why is his hair the way it is?

SANDRA: *I figured that's because he couldn't stand to sit still in a barber chair.*

ADAM: Is that gel, or what?

LARRY: It's dramatic. We're in a commercial field, and part of what we try to do is to make it commercial. And part of being commercial is making it dramatic and interesting-looking and fun to look at and read, and that's all part of it.

SANDRA: *Let's talk about the famous bone claws versus adamantium claws, and that whole business. How far in advance was it discussed that Magneto, after how many decades of fighting the X-Men, it was suddenly going to occur to him to pull the adamantium out of Wolverine?*

LARRY: Pretty far. That was bandied about for quite a bit. Then it was a matter of figuring out how to do it, and exactly where to put it. We knew about it in advance.

ADAM: Where is the adamantium?

SANDRA: *Pardon me?*

ADAM: Where is it?

LARRY: What do you mean, where is it?

ADAM: Where did it go?

LARRY: It fell on the floor. *(Laughter.)*

ADAM: Oh. Okay.

SANDRA: *It got drawn out and dispersed into the universe?*

LARRY: He's got it in a cigar box.

No, it extruded out of him and sort of fell on the floor.

SANDRA: *I think it got swept up by some — remember Damage Control?*

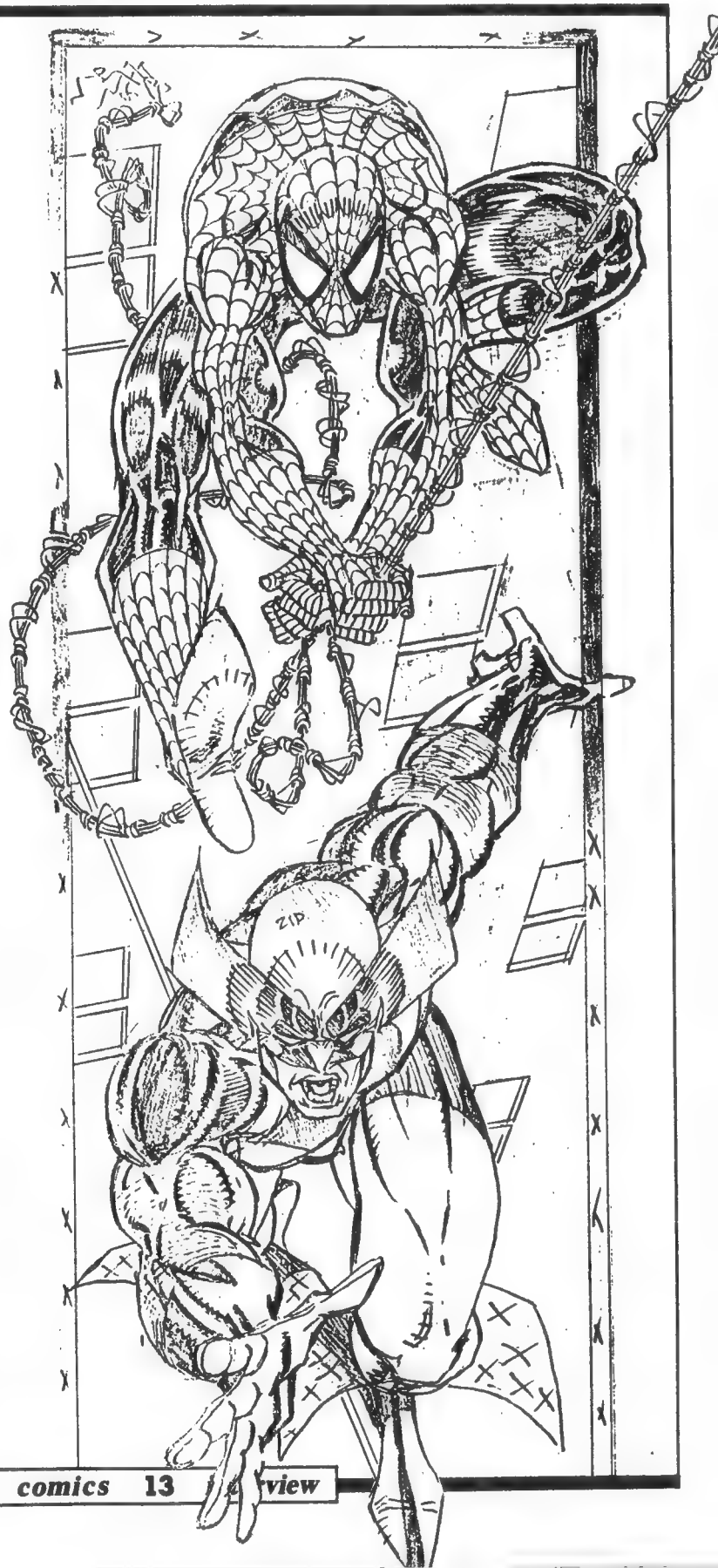
ADAM: Right.

SANDRA: *It's them. They've got it.*

LARRY: No, somebody's got it in a shoe box.

SANDRA: *Somebody better find it, because aren't they going to put it back in him?*

LARRY: That's tricky. I don't know if I should give away too much. It's going to



"I have to work things out. I pull a file out of my

come from a pretty surprising source — that we already know about.

SANDRA: *We've already gotten some hints?*

LARRY: Yeah. So we already know *where* the adamantium is that he's going to get. That's all I can tell you.

What I'm saying is, the answers are right there, in print.

SANDRA: *Aha!*

It's the sort of thing that — I can only see those bone claws so many more times before I get too grossed out. They're really scary. Adam, you do a beautiful job on those.

ADAM: Thanks.

LARRY: I happen to like them without the adamantium. I think there's a lot more room for character development when he doesn't have to depend on this invulnerable power —

SANDRA: *This skeleton that can handle anything.*

LARRY: Yes — which is what it is. And his healing factor. Although that's coming back stronger and stronger, he has to depend on other things. One thing is, he has to think a little more.

SANDRA: *And that's hard for him, sometimes.*

LARRY: I think there's a lot more room for character development when he can't just bang his way out of a situation.

SANDRA: *Or let somebody just beat him up until their hand is so raw they have to leave.*

LARRY: Yeah. *(Laughter.)*

SANDRA: *Adamantium and the healing factor — why do they connect together, Larry?*

LARRY: Do you want the pseudo-scientific explanation? The comic-book explanation?

SANDRA: *Comic-book science!*

LARRY: The microbiologic explanation is — somehow they're connected. I don't know. *(Laughter.)* I sort of make it up as I go along. I actually have it all sort of plotted out and worked out someplace. It's not something I can totally recall off the top of my head, but in order for me to

From Peter David's "Promises to Keep" (WOLVERINE #9) — pencils by Gene Colan. Next page: Top, Jim Lee's pencils (PUNISHER: WAR JOURNAL #6); below, X-Men pre-inks by John Byrne.

computer and go, 'Oh! That's how that works!'"

do what I do I have to work things out. And I *do* actually work things out like that, so that I know someplace I could pull a file out of my computer and go, "Oh! That's why that stuff is that way!" Or "Oh! That's how that stuff works!"

I remember when I took over writing THE AVENGERS for a while, I spent four days rewriting their stupid charter. *(Laughter.)* They had given me the old charter, and I looked at it and said, "Well, this is all out of date," and blah blah blah. And I sort of got carried away. I kept rewriting it and rewriting it and it got all into all this legalese and I had, like, the regulations for the meetings and for stand-in guys, and all that stuff. But by the time I finished it, I had reinforced in my head the real structure. I understood how the organization worked. Doing stuff like that, I think, is very important. When I did the G.I. JOE stuff, I sat down and wrote a "G.I. Joe Order of Battle." A real order of battle is where you figure out who is responsible to who and so on and so forth. It's like a table of organization. I would have that on my computer so that I would know, and have a quick reference guide. If you don't work that stuff out, it's all very haphazard. And the more you have all that stuff worked out for all your characters and situations, the more solid it is — the more this alternate reality is made real. It's like poring through all the appendices in **Tolkien's** LORD OF THE RINGS.

It's like, "Did he really need to do all this stuff to write an adventure story?" But he *did*. He had to create a whole Elvish alphabet.

SANDRA: *It's like the rules for a magic world. You have to establish who can cast the spells, who can counter spells, and rules and regs. It works that way.*

So, you do have some kind of plan in mind for explaining the connection between adamantium and the healing factor?

LARRY: I've already figured that out. I *know* that; I just really can't — there's two factors going on here. I can't really *reveal* too much about that right now, and it *is* complicated in a way that I can't really — I could reach into my computer

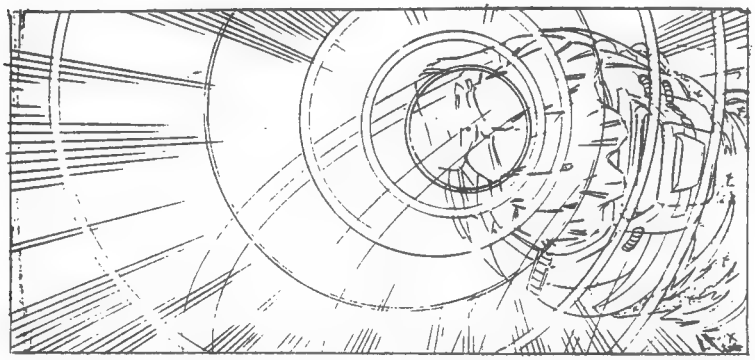
"Do you say 'Zavier' or 'X-Avier'? 'Mag-neat-o' or

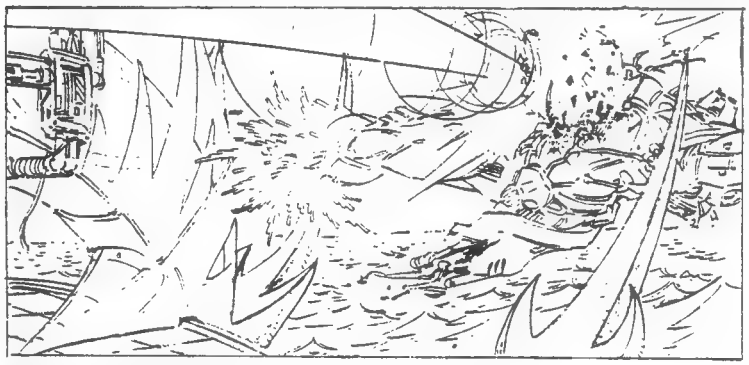
and pull it out, but —

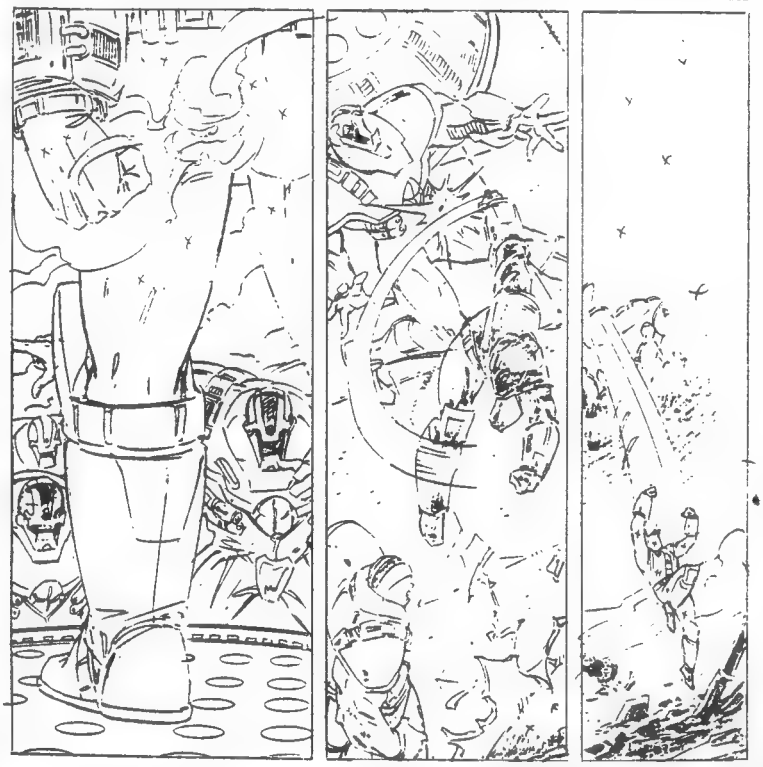
SANDRA: *So, did you make this all up yourself, or did you talk to a scientist about human physiology, as to why this might work?*

LARRY: Oh, yeah. I have a relative who's a microbiologist.

SANDRA: *Oh, excellent! Well, now you know a genetic engineer, if you ever need any of that. So you're covered.*







LARRY: I usually try to find out *something* about these subjects before I delve into them too deeply. I'm a very literal person. I like to have an explanation for stuff. As a kid, I was always bothered by cowboys firing eight shots out of six-shooters, or —

SANDRA: *A continuity person!*

LARRY: Yeah. I like to have all those bases covered, and have it all be logical.

SANDRA: *Makes sense to me!*

LARRY: Makes me happy. *(Laughter.)*

SANDRA: *What's coming up for Wolverine in the next year or so?*

LARRY: All sorts of neat stuff! A *major* confrontation with Sabre-Tooth, that Adam is — even as we speak — pencilling away on.

SANDRA: *So, Adam — do you like drawing Sabre-Tooth?*

ADAM: Yeah. Yeah, he's another cool character. I don't know what else to say. I've only drawn a few pages of it. What other guy do you know who could pull off wearing a feather boa? *(Laughter.)* And still look mean!

SANDRA: *I love it! Okay, so we've got Sabre-Tooth. Who else is dropping by Wolvie's world?*

LARRY: Now we're going to get to some dangerous stuff. Because we're getting into this whole next —

SANDRA: *I mean, are any X-Men dropping in, or Spider-Man, or any of the usuals?*

LARRY: We're talking about four issues of the next cross-over. He's going to be jumping around with the X-Men in a very unusual situation.

ADAM: I saw an ad, in — I guess it was the Marvel solicitation. The illustration was a big X, and one of the arms of the X was crumbling. Professor Xavier's wheelchair was on its side. On the opposite page it said, "The End. Because there was no beginning." Or something like that. And that's what we're doing.

SANDRA: *ZERO HOUR comes to the Marvel Universe? God, I hope not!*

LARRY: Ehhh — no, not in that way.

Do you say "Zavier" or "X-Avier"?

SANDRA: *"X-Avier." I knew a kid named X-Avier.*

LARRY: Do you say "Mag-neat-o" or "MAG-net-o"?

SANDRA: *"Mag-neat-o." He's too neat-o to not be Mag-neat-o.*

LARRY: *(Laughter.)* Do you say Sub-Mar-EE-ner, or Sub-MAR-iner?

SANDRA: *They're never going to be able to print that so it makes sense to somebody reading it.*

LARRY: Well, these are burning issues!

SANDRA: *Actually, they are! Because*

MAG-net-o"? 'Sub-Mar-EE-ner' or Sub-MAR-iner"?"

"Maybe he's better than us in ways. We have to

there are certain characters — if you don't pronounce the name correctly, you don't get *it.*

LARRY: Right. Okay, Andy Capp. *(Laughter.)*

SANDRA: *Enough joviality. Let's talk about — dum dum dum — Wolvie's women. You guys want to talk about women?*

LARRY: Well, Adam likes to draw 'em. I like to put 'em in the story.

SANDRA: *I jotted down a list of six females that came to mind immediately under the topic of "Wolvie's women." I'll mention them and you guys tell me what you think.*

LARRY: Why don't you list all of them first? Then we'll go by them one by one.

SANDRA: *Okay. Here we go. It's sort of like — well, we won't say "oldest," because that might get me psychokinetically kicked in the butt. But anyway — Jean Gray, Yukio, Silver Fox, Kitty Pryde, Jubilee, and LCD.*

LARRY: What can I say? LCD's an android.

SANDRA: *I know. But she falls into the category of "Wolvie's women."*

LARRY: Jubilee is, like, thirteen years old! *(Laughter.)* Although people tend to draw her looking quite a bit older than that. Silver Fox is dead — and truly.

SANDRA: *He loved her, but then they were enemies?*

LARRY: Right.

SANDRA: *But in the end, as she died, everything came clear?*

LARRY: Right.

SANDRA: *And she's buried up in Canada? The Great White North?*

LARRY: Right. For real. It's not an illusion. In fact, Wolverine now actually knows a great deal about what he thought was real and what isn't. I tried to clear that up a bit. In my head, a lot of those implants, he can now see through, so the whole implant thing is now a moot point at this point, okay?

I just wanted to clear that up.

SANDRA: *Got it. So Silver Fox is dead, and she doesn't count.*

LARRY: Silver Fox is dead, Mariko is dead —

SANDRA: *That's why she didn't make the list. Yeah, he almost married her, but, y'know — pfft!*

LARRY: Jean Gray — she's —

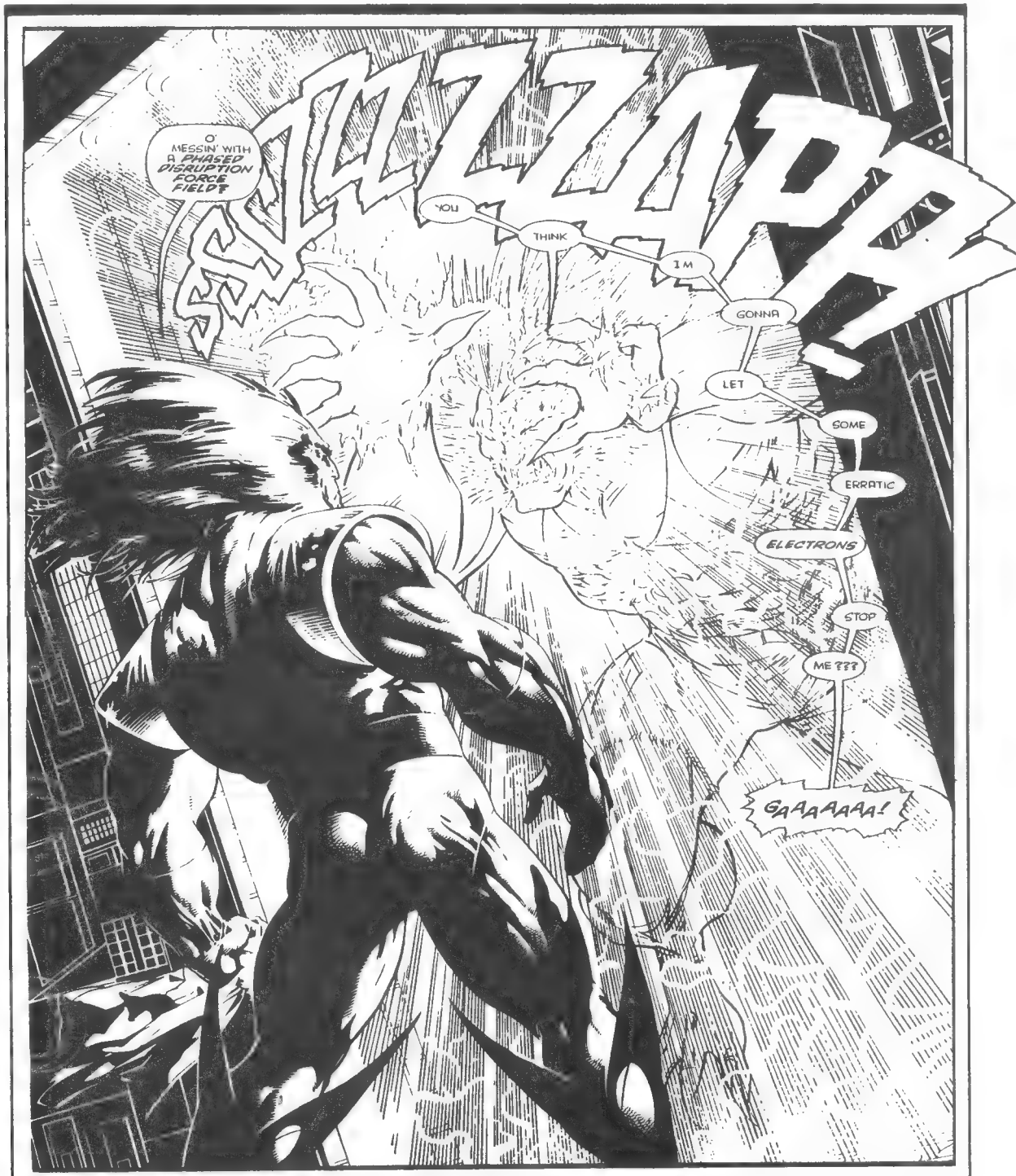
SANDRA: *She's* been *dead.*

LARRY: Yeah, she's *been* dead. *(Laughter.)* Sort of. Not really.

SANDRA: *Yeah, but he was in love with her. Does he still carry a torch for her?*

LARRY: Oh, I think so. I think he's a guy that — that's a real important factor in his

sense he would make a more valid ethical choice."



make-up. Once he loves somebody, that's pretty much it. He can't really cancel that whole part out of his brain and his psyche.

SANDRA: *And so her marriage to Scott has, like, really messed him over, huh?*

LARRY: There's another factor going there. He's friends with Scott. And sometimes love goes beyond possessiveness. Sometimes there is a purer form of it.

SANDRA: *Or he wants her to be happy at all costs?*

LARRY: Yeah. I have to believe that there's some sort of noble core in him. Maybe he's better than us in a lot of ways. That's the fantasy about him that makes him an interesting character for me to deal with. We have to always have the sense that he would make a more valid ethical choice than a normal person.

SANDRA: *Because, let's face it — he's got six razor-sharp claws. And you've got to learn to make ethical choices when you're built like that.*

LARRY: I think it's beyond that. I think

"It's got all the good stuff but not the terrible stuff."

it's —

SANDRA: *You've got to make the* right *choice.*

LARRY: Right.

SANDRA: *So, has he seen Jean since the wedding?*

LARRY: Sure.

SANDRA: *And everything's cool?*

LARRY: Oh, yeah. He just saw her in #85, and in CABLE, in two episodes of the old Phalanx. They were on Muir Island.

SANDRA: *Oh, that's right. By the time all this comes out, everyone will be going, "Huh? But that was so long ago. Why is he talking about it?"*

Let's move on. Yukio. The ronin, as it were, the female ronin with the man's name. What's the deal?

LARRY: What's the deal? Their relationship goes back quite a long ways. It's one of those — it's very hard for somebody to —

SANDRA: *Does she love him? Clearly, she wants something more out of this. I don't know if it's partnership, or what, but she seems to show up at awfully convenient times.*

LARRY: I think that she's still carrying more of a torch for him than — I don't think he ever really carried a torch for her. There's sort of an unequal relationship there. And that's what gives it that facet some interest.

SANDRA: *Adam, when Yukio shows up, we're often treated to Tokyo. We're having sushi and drinking sake. Do you find that a challenge to draw? Or are you familiar with Tokyo on a first-hand basis?*

ADAM: I'm not familiar with Tokyo on a first-hand basis. Yeah, it's a challenge to draw. Again, Larry provides me with enough reference on the subject. In fact, when I had to draw that issue — what was that black-and-white comic that you gave me? Um — it wasn't AKIRA . . .

LARRY: Oh, it was in Japanese. I have no idea what it's called.

ADAM: It was by the same guy that did AKIRA.

LARRY: Yeah. It had residential Tokyo, and what the houses look like — and it was fun to do. I sent you those books, too.

ADAM: Yeah. You work with reference, and the rest, you make up.

SANDRA: *And it's dark. Let's face it.*

ADAM: I'd *love* to take a tax-deductible trip to Tokyo in the middle of a story, but —

SANDRA: *Well, you can't go to Madripoor, because it doesn't exist.*

Or — does *it exist in this real world, and it goes by another name?*

LARRY: Madripoor? I always figured Madripoor was either, um —

SANDRA: *I thought it was Hong Kong.*

ADAM: No, I think it's Bangkok. It's sort of a combination of Bangkok and Singapore.

SANDRA: *Sounds good! Let's go.*

LARRY: Well, it's got all the good stuff, but not the terrible stuff.

SANDRA: *Okay — Kitty Pryde. When*

JEAN BITING LOWER LIP
UH-OH...

"This is kids' entertainment, and these characters

she came to the X-Men, she seemed to kind of gravitate under Wolverine's protective shoulder. What's the attraction for these young women to this man?

LARRY: Well, I think he's sort of a "safe" older brother in a lot of ways. But at the same time, there *is* a strange sort of attraction. They sort of want him, but don't know why. It's hard to put into words. It's a lot easier to draw it. *(Laughter.)*

SANDRA: *Stick Adam with it!*

ADAM: I think Wolverine is an honorable and trustful person. And the young women — I think that might be what attracts *him* to *them*. We *know* there's not going to be any games played here. He will honorably take them under his wing and help them legitimately any way he can.

LARRY: There's always a juggling effect. Even though that's *his* intent, there always seems to be this *frisson* on the other side. It's not that they *desire* him as much as there's always that undercurrent of *jealousy* when another female is taking his attention.

Everyone who deals with these characters and those relationships is totally aware of that. Nobody ever talks about it much, and it's never really come on the surface of a story, but it's the subtext all the time. And that's what sort of makes it interesting.

SANDRA: *There was the one time Mystique lured Wolverine off in the guise of Jean Gray. And he knew it was Mystique, and Jubilee was so jealous she came down on a rollerblade to find out what was going on. And she was really ticked. I think sometimes it does come right up to the surface and bubble over. I think Jubilee is going to be really very upset with being sent off to Massachusetts.*

Now, let's talk about my favorite android, and the only non-organic member of Wolvie's women — LCD. Where did she come from?

LARRY: You mean, literally?

SANDRA: *No, in the story. How did she get introduced in the story? She's been around a long time.*

LARRY: She was created by Pierce. Her and Albert were created by Pierce — she was originally created as a walking time bomb. She was packed with explosives, and her purpose was to get right up to Wolverine. He was supposed to rescue her from a burning building, and as he was running out of the building with her clutched to his chest, she was supposed to detonate herself and blow them both up. But somewhere along the line, she realizes that in the act of Wolverine saving her — he gets so burned in the fire, and she has this realization that, hey, this creature put himself through all this pain to do something for her, and it triggers these semi-organic synapses that had never been triggered before and she realizes that she can't kill him. And that's when she becomes no longer a tool of Pierce.

SANDRA: *Adam, when you draw her, what reference material do you use to get her to look like a real little child?*

ADAM: **Marc Silvestri's** version of her. I only drew her once, and that was on a cover.

I draw upon my own children. These are kids. It's just as tricky drawing Wolverine five-foot-three as it is drawing a 5-year-old. You've got to draw on life experiences.

SANDRA: *Many artists are totally incapable of drawing children that look like children. They look like little tiny adults. They don't look like kids.*

ADAM: Yeah, it's a difficult thing.

SANDRA: *Well, you did a great job on*

BACK IN CANADA I PROMISED JAMES HUDSON, I'D STOP OVER IN 'FRISCO AND CHECK UP ON THE KANE KID FOR HIM...
...ANOTHER WEAPON X. HE'S SUPPOSED TO BE...
YEAH. RIGHT.
SOMETHIN' ABOUT THE SPLINTERED DOOR TOLD ME THERE WAS TROUBLE HERE...
ARE YOU IN THERE, KANE?
ANYBODY IN THERE?

are alive in their minds. And they *are* role models."

that cover, because it looks like she's pointing right at you, going, "Don't you do that!" I remember that cover. That was a good one.

LARRY: She's also a lot smarter than your average 5- or 6-year-old. She's got a real will of her own. She's one of those characters that weren't really meant to be a running character. We were just going to have her blow up. It's one of those things. Once they get on the page, they start to have a life of their own. You go, "Gee, I like this character." When they're walking around and talking, you begin to really have an affinity for them.

SANDRA: *Well, I like her. She's a no-nonsense kind of android. She's got it all together.*

LARRY: That's why we decided to keep her around.

SANDRA: *That's good. Well, tell me — what about the great hot debate — and I use the term "hot" deliberately for the pun — about the smoking. There's been a lot of talk about the kid's letter to the American Medical Association about the comic-book characters smoking, and there's talk about trying to get some of the characters to quit. Wolverine is famous for it.*

ADAM: Wolverine quit smoking in issue #75.

SANDRA: *I still see him on the cover, in the corner box, with a cigarette in his hand.*

LARRY: That's true. But he threw away his cigarettes and cigars over a year ago. In no story that *I've* written has he — he hasn't smoked since he got the adamantium out.

ADAM: Although **Ron Wagner** drew him with a cigar.

SANDRA: *Uh-oh.*

LARRY: Yeah. And that got past Editorial.

SANDRA: *Ron Wagner, huh? Tsk tsk tsk.*

LARRY: But Editorial is supposed to keep an eye on that and make sure that Wolverine is not smoking in any other —

SANDRA: *Yeah, because he was smoking in issue #84.*

LARRY: Well, he wasn't supposed to be.

SANDRA: *I think that is a reasonable thing to address, though. A lot of kids idolize Wolverine — they want to be tough, like he is.*

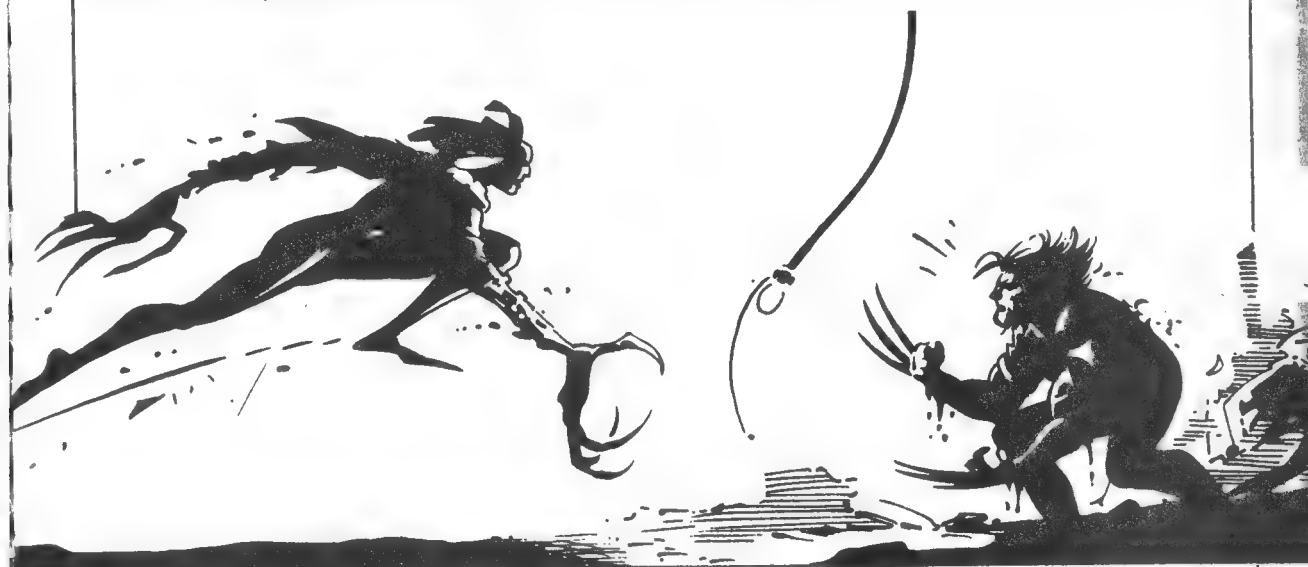
ADAM: That goes back to the responsibility of Larry and I, and everyone else involved in putting this together. This is basically kids' entertainment, and these characters are alive in their minds. And they *are* role models. And if they smoke, and the kids see it's cool to smoke, then we're not setting the right example.

Although it is cool drawing it. The smoke is dramatic; the cigarettes are dramatic; the cigars are dramatic . . .

SANDRA: *Now, what other positive messages do you think Wolverine can send out?*

ADAM: Well, he's an honorable character. He tries as best he can to be honest with himself.

LARRY: That's enough! That's the main thing that's wrong with everything. Somewhere along the line, our society got messed up to the point where we said, well, gee, it's so hard to be honorable, why should we expect it of anybody? We



"Our jobs are to cooperate. He takes my plot and

don't even expect it of a president. But I think maybe it is something to be wished for. It is something to be emulated — to have a sense of honor, a sense that there is a higher cause.

SANDRA: *I think you also made some statements in some earlier adventures that you had written, Larry, about the environment, worrying about the wildlife — being Canadian, and about the great wilderness of Canada and trying to protect it from things. I don't remember what particular aspects were in the story, but it did hold a very global ecology message.*

LARRY: Well, there is a lot of this stuff that — who knows what it really means? You know — "Oh, it's much better not to use nuclear fuel" and blah blah blah, but then we find out that in the rest of the world, the real heavy pollutants are wood smoke and stuff like that. And that's what kills people — sitting around and inhaling all of that unburned carbon.

SANDRA: *But it smells damn good as it goes down!*

LARRY: Whatever works for you. But you just can't tell anymore. You stop eating butter and use oleo, and then all of a sudden they tell you the oleo is worse for you than the butter. It's one thing or the other.

SANDRA: *Tell me, each of you, what would your dream assignment be? We'll start with Adam this time.*

ADAM: My dream assignment?

SANDRA: *Dream assignment! Anything you want! It could be Wolverine, could be something else, could be some other company — whatever.*

ADAM: I'm *doing* my dream assignment right now.

LARRY: You don't want to draw the White Queen versus Moon Knight during a snowstorm? *(Laughter.)*

ADAM: I grew up on DC Comics.

You know, I *would* like to do — I like Lobo, as a character. Wolverine versus Lobo would be cool.

SANDRA: *I think that would sell outrageous quantities.*

ADAM: I guess. But that would be cool. Lobo is a brainless character, but he's cool looking.

SANDRA: *But he's got his own sense of values. They're really weird, but —*

How about you, Larry?

LARRY: A dream project? It's hard for me to — I've gotten to do most of the stuff I've always wanted to do. I've been very lucky.

SANDRA: *Do you long to create your own universe? Or work with some particular other creator that you've always admired, or anything like that?*

LARRY: Well, I've been very lucky that I've had a chance to work with some of the best guys in the business — for a couple of generations! I started out working for **Wally Wood** and **Neal Adams**, so . . .

SANDRA: *It's hard to go much higher.*

LARRY: And they were great guys to work with. And I've had a chance to work with some of the top talents in the field, and I appreciate it. It was always a thrill.

SANDRA: *And how much longer do you think you'll stay in the field?*

ADAM: I don't know. I always think, as long as you *like* doing the stuff, and it really gets you going, then you've got a chance. But I think as soon as you don't *like* it anymore, soon as it's not *fun* anymore, then you'd better hang it up. It becomes a *job*.

LARRY: Yeah, then it becomes a job. I don't look on it as a job. I look it as, jeez, I like to do this. If I wanted a job, I'd go back to advertising or something. I like what I do; I like the people.

SANDRA: *So, you're pretty happy, huh?*

LARRY: I'm the luckiest boy in the world! *(Laughter.)*

SANDRA: *How about you, Adam? Are you pretty satisfied?*

enhances it. I take the pencils and try to enhance that."

ADAM: Yeah! I feel real fortunate that I can make my own hours, more or less, that I work for myself, I don't have somebody breathing down my back, making sure — well — *(Laughter.)*

SANDRA: *He's not in the same* room *with you.*

LARRY: Don't answer that phone when Bob calls. *(Laughter.)* "Where's that Adam? He's not answering the phone, God damn it! I know he's there!"

ADAM: It's a great job! I can work anywhere in the world, via Federal Express!

SANDRA: *So you can go to the beach, and be with your family, and —*

ADAM: No way would I work at the beach! But I could live anywhere. How many jobs are there where you can go to a convention and people ask for your signature, ask you to draw something — it's a great job!

LARRY: A lot of times, when quote, civilians, unquote, ask me what I do, I say, "Did you see the movie, BIG?" *(Laughter.)* That's basically it. I sit around and make up fun stuff all day. What better gig is there than that?

SANDRA: *Sounds great to me! Do you have any sage words of advice for kids who want to start in writing and art and things?*

LARRY: Do you want to start with that, Adam?

ADAM: Sure. I think the most important thing is that they *enjoy* drawing. With that, they'll do it more and more, and they'll improve more and more. If this is something that they want to turn into a profession, then the opportunities are there. People are always looking for quality work. The main thing is to enjoy doing it, because you *will* be spending a lot of time doing it. If you *don't* enjoy it, then it'll be hell.

LARRY: From my point of view, I can totally agree with Adam. It's also the fact that — I don't really consider myself a writer. I spent *most* of my life as a penciller.

ADAM: And a *good* penciller, too!

LARRY: Thank you!

I sort of see myself as a penciller who, instead of drawing his stuff now, describes it. I'm sort of pencilling in a different way. I'm pencilling with a word processor. But basically, I purposely try to tell stories with pictures. I try to work my plots so that it's a succession of images. And the most exciting images I can think of that create the continuity and the exposition with imagery rather than through characters talking or a narrator or captions.

In fact, I'm totally against captions. The only captions that I put into my stories are first-person Wolverine dialog captions, or at the most, something like "The next day, dot dot dot," or, "Meanwhile, in Potato Salad Land."

SANDRA: *The things that have to be there, or it doesn't make sense?*

LARRY: Right. Purple prose is for novels. *Prose* is for novels. In a visual medium, like comics, that's taken care of in the picture. And if the picture tells it, then you don't have to have a caption explaining what the picture is. You let the picture tell the story.

And that brings us full circle back to what I originally said about it really being a cooperative medium, and the artist's job is not to tell my story. Our jobs together are to cooperate in telling *our* story. He takes my plot and enhances it, and I take the pencil pages and try to enhance that. It's back and forth. You really play it back and forth. And that's what I really like about the Marvel process of doing things — you get a second chance at it. *(Laughter.)*

ADAM: I prefer working from a plot to from a script, because I'm not restricted at all. I interpret what Larry has in mind, and then he helps it make sense when he dialogs. It's a good way to work.

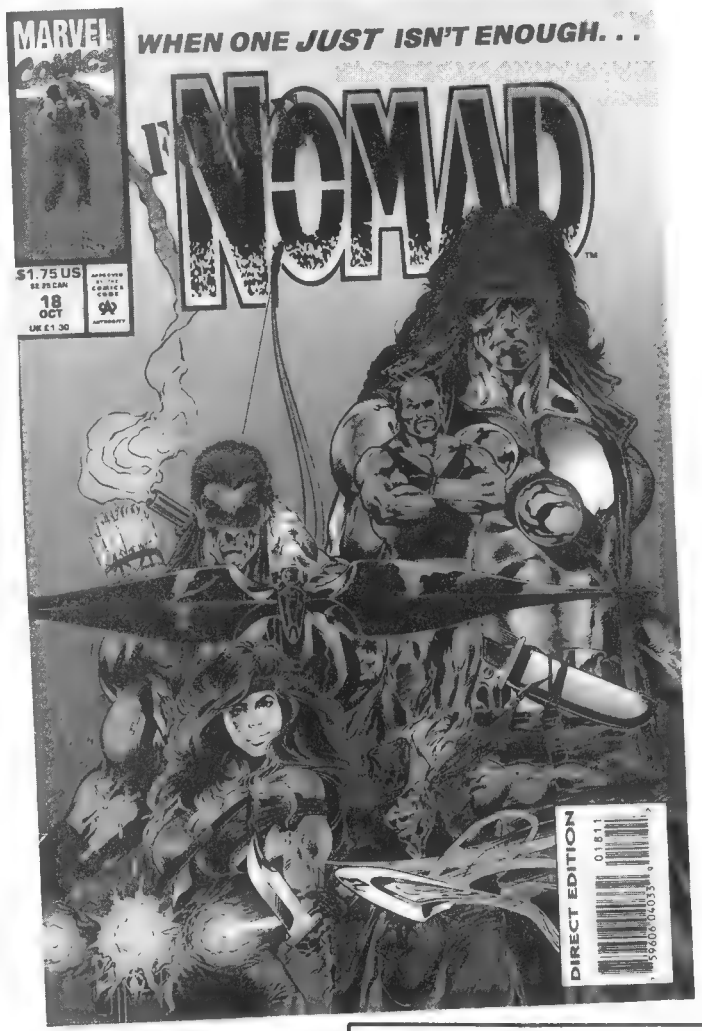
"A lot of the story is told through characters'

GLENN HERDLING & RICK MAYS

As devoted fans already are aware, NOMAD was cancelled with issue #25 — a casualty of the current industry implosion so accurately predicted by our publisher in an editorial for INTERVIEW #128. As fans are also aware, NOMAD was an American attempt at Japanese manga with a superhero slant — an interesting experiment worthy of further attention in the following interview . . .

DEBBIE DAVID: *Let's start with Mister Editor. Glenn, you've taken a comic book in a slightly different direction for Marvel. This is very unusual.*

GLENN HERDLING: NOMAD has *always* been slightly different because it's not the straight superhero type of book; it's more about a guy who is trying to find himself. He's trying to find himself *through* his explorations of America. So, he doesn't wear spandex; he doesn't wear a mask. The closest thing he has to a costume is his belt buckle; the closest thing he has to a mask is the sunglasses that he wears.



DEBBIE: *Had you ever had an interest in manga before?*

GLENN: I've always been interested. In fact, there's a Japanese SPIDER-MAN that they did 'way back when, when I was in the SPIDER-MAN office with COMICS INTERVIEW co-founder **Jim Salicrup.**

DEBBIE: *When was that?*

GLENN: It was . . . from '87 through '89, I guess. I started working there and became aware of the existence of this Japanese SPIDER-MAN and I've been *trying* ever since to get it translated into English. And I've seen others. I really love AKIRA; I think it's great — the film and the comic book.

DEBBIE: *Is there a difference between the Japanese SPIDER-MAN and the American SPIDER-MAN?*

GLENN: Yeah, there is. It's a completely different character. The cast of characters is completely different. It's in Tokyo. The only thing that's the same is he puts on a Spider-Man costume.

DEBBIE: *Is it more traditionally Japanese with more gimmicks and maybe more armor involved?*

GLENN: Somewhat, somewhat. I don't think he has *many* more gimmicks than our Spider-Man. But it's funny. The style and everything is very manga, *except* for Spider-Man! When Spider-Man appears — and he doesn't appear too often — he looks like a **John Romita** Spider-Man.

All art accompanying this interview, Nomad and associated characters, are TM & ©1994 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. unless otherwise noted.

faces. That was one of Rick's strong points."

Here and throughout this interview, artwork produced by the team of Rick Mays (pencils) & Greg Adams (inks) — from Marvel's cancelled NOMAD.

DEBBIE: *They're going according to the model sheets provided by Marvel, then?*

GLENN: Right.

DEBBIE: *Very interesting. Now, back to NOMAD: Artist Rick Mays' work is very influenced by the Japanese?*

GLENN: Rick's work was very *different.* It's very realistic looking in some places, but then when he got expressive it's very Japanese looking, especially in the action scenes. The faces on some of the characters, *very* influenced by the Japanese, but in the close-ups it's very picturesque, very graphic. I thought it was a very neat mix, you know. And NOMAD, a lot of it is carried through by the facial emotions; a lot of the story is told through the characters' faces. I figured that was one of Rick's strong points, *especially* in the issue that we first assigned him.

DEBBIE: *Yeah. One of the things about manga is there's a lot of subjectivity, with a lot of close-ups on what the character's thinking. The other aspect of manga that's apparent in Rick's work seems to be the cinematic approach to fight scenes and action and angles. Have you found that also in his work?*

GLENN: Exactly. He does that very well, using the speed line and using the characterization. And I *love* the way he draws Bucky!

DEBBIE: *Bucky looks like a child.*

GLENN: Yeah, he *does* look like a child! *(Laughter.)*

DEBBIE: *Okay, let's go over to Rick. What are your influences for your work?*

RICK MAYS: Well . . .

DEBBIE: *Where did you get your training? Let's start there.*

RICK: I had a lot of art classes in high school .It was almost *all* art in high school. And when I graduated I went to the Art Institute of Pittsburgh where I just practiced drawing a lot more often.

DEBBIE: *And did you go right into working on comics from there?*

RICK: I wanted to *animate.* The idea of doing comic books was inconceivable. I couldn't imagine doing that — *(Laughter.)*

DEBBIE: *He just made a gesture of drawing* very *slowly.*

RICK: With a sound effect: er-ee er-ee er-ee er-ee. *(Laughter.)*

DEBBIE: *That's E R dash E E repeated, a nasal sound effect.* (Laughter.)

RICK: About the time I was 20 I started to really get into manga —

DEBBIE: *How did you get into manga? How did you get your first Japanese comic? Was it a* genuine *Japanese comic?*

RICK: My first Japanese comic? After I had been collecting animation for so long I had all these phone numbers and addresses of places you could order it from. It was Nikaku Animart. I saw something that was called CRYING FREEMAN — and I had been looking through a bunch of animation magazines, new type animation magazines, and there was a tiny little ad at the bottom of a page —

DEBBIE: *He's indicating about one column length, one inch long.*

RICK: A *tiny* little ad. I was like, "Man, this looks like the guy that did MAI." MAI, THE PSYCHIC GIRL came out and everybody was going on about how cool this manga stuff was. So, this ad was CRYING *something* in Japanese, and then Nikaku Animart had CRYING FREEMAN and I wondered if that was it, so I sent for these books. When they came I was like: *(guttural sound effects expressing amazement).*

GLENN: Translate that. *(Laughter.)*

RICK: I was just totally blown away. So then I just started ordering books, more books, and as much as I was still into animation I liked manga even more. That was something I could *do!* That's when I started doing black-and-white comics. That's when I decided that's what I

"The better the art is, the less he has to write."

wanted to do.

DEBBIE: *So, that basically snowballed from there, when you started collecting anything you could get your hands on that was manga?*

RICK: *Yeah, yeah.*

DEBBIE: *So, Ryuichi Ikegami would be your main influence?*

RICK: **Ryuichi Ikegami** of MAI and CRYING FREEMAN, and **Shiro Masamune** of APPLESEED and ORION. I was into **Katsuhiro Otomo** for awhile, but after I saw a lot of other guys AKIRA just failed for me. His architecture and his vehicles are just beautiful, and his storytelling is good, but his style isn't all that attractive to me.

DEBBIE: *You seem to be attracted to the more mature manga works. Manga has traditionally had characters that are a little more cartooney than American comics, but people like Ikegami tend to be more mature, a little bit more toward illustration.*

RICK: He uses a classical *old* brushing style, and that can be a liability. There's a guy named **Katsura Masazuko,** does a book called VIDEO GIRL, and there's a guy named **Masanori Morita,** does a book called ROKU DONASHI BLUES. His fight scenes are really well done. That's where I get a lot of my action effects from.

DEBBIE: *So, okay, now we've got something that pretty much adds up to Rick Mays. Are there any American works that mix into this?*

RICK: I have Spanish, Italian and American. *(Laughter.)* There's a guy named **Serpieri** that did MORBIUS GRAVIS. **Milo Manara,** who is *terrific!*

DEBBIE: *One of the best.*

RICK: **Adam Hughes** is the only American.

DEBBIE: *What do you like about Adam Hughes?*

RICK: He's got such a smooth line. You can look at his stuff and just tell his line control is so great. He controls the thickness and the consistency so *well.*

DEBBIE: *So, let's get to NOMAD. You saw his samples?*

GLENN: I saw his samples.

DEBBIE: *Had you done anything professionally before that?*

RICK: Professionally, not really.

DEBBIE: *Were you active in anything manga-oriented?*

RICK: The stuff I brought in as samples. I brought in this thing I did when I first started practicing, doing manga page after page. I did that in 1990 and it was about 13 pages, a book I was planning to put out but I never finished. Oh, I can name two more influences.

DEBBIE: *Sure, go ahead.*

RICK: **Eric von Lustbader** and **John Woo.** Shoot-'em-up bang bang movies.

DEBBIE: *There does seem to be a little bit of Chinese influence in your work, too.*

RICK: Yeah, I've seen Chinese comics. I mean, I love to go down to Chinatown. You can buy a lot of stuff down there.

DEBBIE: *There's a Japanese shopping center in Jersey. You take a shuttle bus from Port Authority, and that was where I got the first Ikegami book. I had to have it translated. There was this priest being taken out to be executed, and you start listening to him. Throughout the book he's* teaching *Judaism! And the artwork is gorgeous. I'm not quite sure how a priest sets out to teach Judaism, but it's incredible. It's nothing that's been out in America.*

RICK: Glenn, Glenn. *(Laughter.)*

DEBBIE: *Yeah, we should get back to NOMAD.*

GLENN: The first thing I thought was: Different! That's what I wanted. This book was different. I wanted someone on it who was different. I didn't want something mainstream. Clark was different enough but he was still very **Neal Adams,** so when I saw Rick's stuff I said, *"Wow,* this stuff is *different!"* It really has *many* influences, but he's got a style all of his own.

DEBBIE: *At the same time, Rick's first comic book came at a time when everybody was pretty much looking in the direction of Image, of pinups, a lot of details and lines and crosshatching. Did you think this would be any kind of risk?*

GLENN: I thought it was *very* risky, yes. Very, very risky!

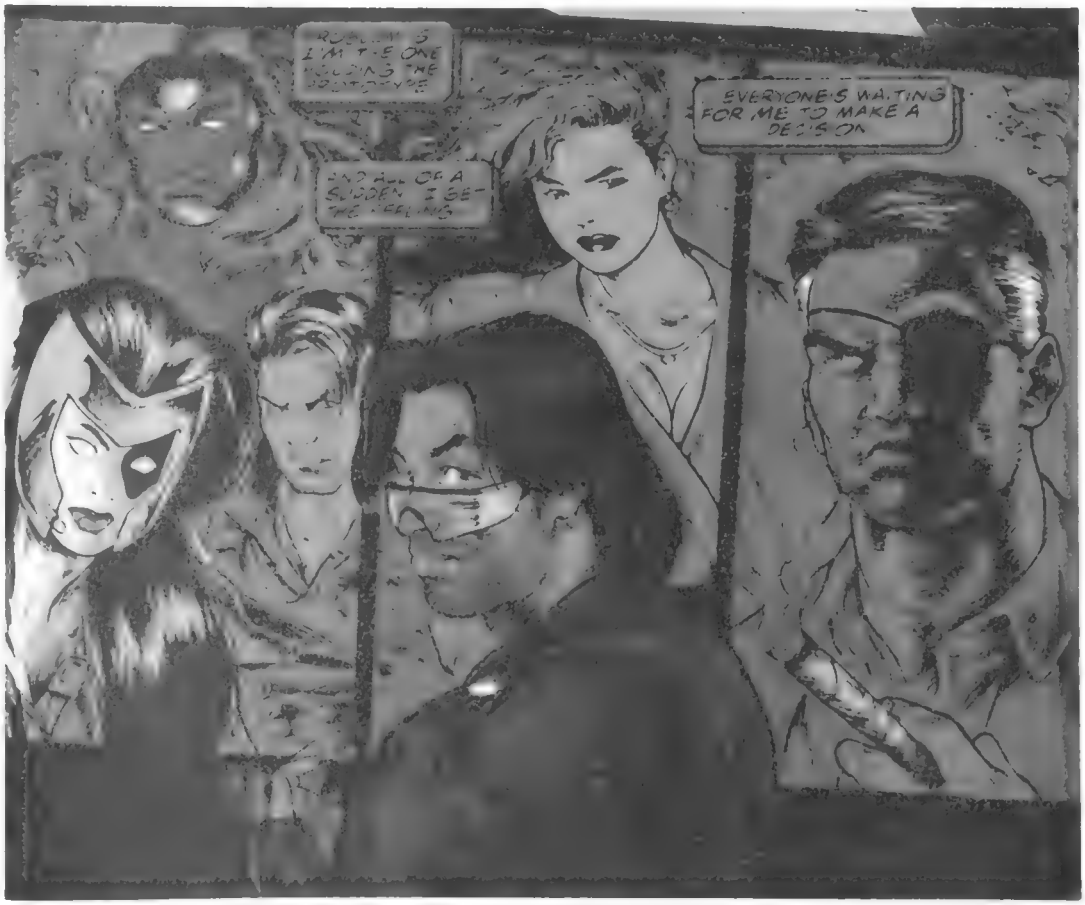
RICK: And it apparently still is. *(Laughter.)*

GLENN: Yeah, it still is. But I never wanted to subject NOMAD to popular hype, you know. Marvel's own underground title is really what I wanted it to be, as close to underground as it could be and still be in the Marvel Universe.

DEBBIE: *Well, Rick, when you did this, were you given any specific instructions on anything? Or did you just basically do it your way? What happened?*

RICK: Well, at the time — really, it's real weird, because at the time I was into all this stuff that's now the Vertigo line at DC — at the time I got hired SHADE, THE CHANGING MAN was my favorite title. I wasn't reading much manga because I was trying to bone up for a

"NOMAD has *always* been slightly different."



career in American comics. So, the first time, I basically went through the first issue, NOMAD #11, I was just testing the waters and the pencils basically came out like NOMAD, THE CHANGING MAN. It sat for a little while and I did some stuff for DC that never saw print.

DEBBIE: *Were you reading American comics before you started reading Japanese comics?*

RICK: I read American comics when I was really young, but when I started reading Japanese comics I was reading *exclusively* Japanese comics, and I discovered comics from there, **Milo Manara** and **Adam Hughes.**

DEBBIE: *So, with NOMAD you hit on this style which is a cross between your own, all your influences, a heavy dose of Japanese, some cinema, part of your animation training, and came up with something that looks very reminiscent of manga for a mainstream comic book. Glenn, what kind of reaction did you get from fans and from other creators?*

GLENN: Did you see the letter in issue #14? *(Laughter.)*

DEBBIE: *Yeah, I remember that. You got a lot of flak for doing this. But at the same time —*

GLENN: That letter was from somebody who probably wants to see another X-title. I'm not going to do that. I'm not going to guest-star Wolverine in every issue, bring in the X-Breed. If you read X-MEN you may not be interested in NOMAD, but the guy reading NOMAD might not be interested in X-MEN and that's the way I wanted it.

DEBBIE: *So, what was your target audience?*

GLENN: I think our target audience was pretty much the Vertigo readers, people who read SANDMAN, people who are looking for something more meaningful but still like the superhero aspects of it. Maybe, actually, the reader we were after is someone *between* CAPTAIN AMERICA and SANDMAN, somewhere between there.

DEBBIE: *But, like — getting flak, I've only seen what you printed, that you're not afraid to show, where people have complained that it looks kind of funny, they're not used to it. Do you think that people will ever get accustomed to this?*

GLENN: I *know* that they will. There are people that really loved it and got into it.

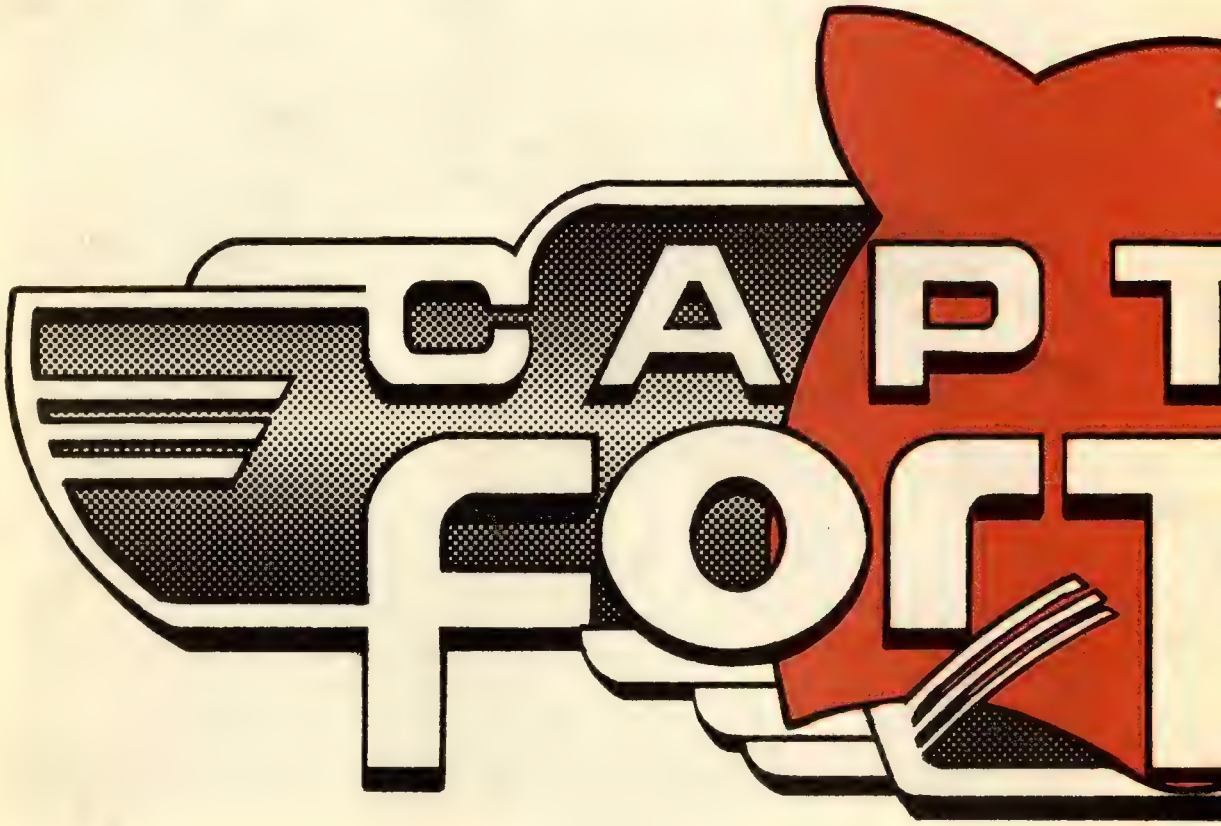
DEBBIE: *Yeah. He's not here, but Fabian Nicieza, the writer — was he looking in any way at the manga aspects in what he wrote?*

GLENN: No. He had a rough outline of what he wanted to do with NOMAD and followed that outline pretty much through. There have been deviations from what he originally planned, but for the most part he stuck to exactly where he wanted NOMAD to go. And that's why Rick was perfect for Fabian. The facial expressions on these characters in the close-ups, you knew *exactly* what the character was thinking.

DEBBIE: *And in the fight scenes you could follow the action.*

GLENN: Right. Fabian has various writing styles, you know. He was very minimalist with dialogue in NOMAD, whereas in the mutant books he'll write a lot more dialogue. In NOMAD he tried to get the perspective from one character. And the better the art is, the more *expressive* the art is, then the less he has to write — and Fabian loves *that! (Laughter.)*

sex violence



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"Batman has always been a favorite. The big capper

Al Bigley, one of the pencillers of the MIGHTY MORPHIN POWER RANGERS comic book, has quite an impressive resumé. He has worked on everything from BATMAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES Happy Meal boxes for McDonald's to GHOST WRITER for the Children's Television Workshop to the MICHAEL JORDAN COMIC BOOK for Beckett. Al is also a stay-at-home dad for his young son, Dolan, and an inspiration to artists taking a non-studio approach to comics.

In part two of his insightful interview, Al shares secrets with Sandra Dincher . . .

SANDRA: *Let's talk about BATMAN: THE ANIMATED ADVENTURES. We mentioned earlier the work you'd done with the style guides, and how some of it had wound up on T-shirts and things. But what I found the most fascinating was you work on what I consider the ultimate American origami — the McDonald's*

Comic-book Knight (in a Novick style) meets the Fox Network's BATMAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES (a quasi-Fleischer Bros. attitude, for sure!). As in the previous graphics, Al has provided both artwork and the finished inking.

MIGHTY MORPHIN POWER RANGERS TM & © 1994 Saban International Services, Inc. / Batman, Robin, The Joker, The Penguin, Catwoman, Two-Face & Phantasm ©1994 DC

was my artwork on national prime-time TV."

AL BIGLEY

"There's nothing like seeing your work

Happy Meal boxes. How did you get that assignment?

AL: It all goes back to 1990, when **Joe Orlando** called me out of the blue up at DC. He is one of the head guys up in the special projects department, and he was looking at samples that, surprisingly enough, were about two years old at that time. And I think they were Iron Man samples I had done in 1988 for Marvel. I started doing Golden Storybooks based on the regular version of Batman — Batman Regular, so to speak. And I did some T-shirt work and various things like that. Years later, there was the big push for the Batman animated series, which was about to premiere in 1992. I did original style guide stuff on the first style guide, and some product work. I guess it was June of '93 they said McDonald's had approached us about some Happy Meal boxes. They were going to give me one of the box designs to do, and I pushed for two, because I had a space open. I love drawing those characters — Batman has always been a favorite. That wasn't as much trouble as you might think, because I had to go through the McDonald's people, and they had provided us with rather comprehensive layouts. They weren't rendered by a comic-book artist, but they were all pretty much there.

A frequent problem with clients when you're dealing with this kind of work is they want to see from you exactly what's in their mind. And you can't always match that, and there's some friction on their end. But this time there was a great deal of layout provided. And we just did it twice-up in size. A lot of the puzzles and things were provided. And it was great, because **Bhob Stewart** up at DC — he was the actual editor on this material; and he's under **Joe Orlando** — he was telling me how nicely they were going to be rendered in color. Full-color process, and they were going to be a real nice showpiece. So that got me kind of worked up. McDonald's had a few changes. Mostly it was for copy. They were very meticulous about copy not covering somebody's knee or going onto Batman's cape or what-

Catwoman and Two-Face look on as Batman makes his way up a very strange ladder. Al's pencils for the "Happy Meal" box from the Golden Arches: McDonald's (inks: DeCarlo). Bigley has seen hundreds — thousands! — of copies in streets and gutters. Above, center: a spot illo of the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers — pencils & inks by Al.

in a parking lot, smashed flat by a truck."

have-you. The other boxes, I think, were done by **Ty Templeton** and somebody else I'm sorry to say I can't remember right now; I can't think of his name. **Howie Post** did some of that work but I don't think he did the other box.

The thing was, they were supposed to come out, I believe, in July or August, because there was a really big push on that end to get them out. And they didn't come out until November at McDonald's. I was very impressed with the final boxes, and I was going in to my local McDonald's and asking if I could just get the flat boxes. And of course, they were looking at me like I was some kind of nut. *(Laughter.)* They'd bring them out, and sometimes they would ask, and I'd tell them I drew them. And they'd say, "Yeah, that's nice — now, get out of the store or order a Big Mac or something."

Now, the big capper to that was sitting down and watching Prime Time television, you know, ABC television, and there's your artwork on national advertising for this campaign. And that was just a really big kick. It goes back to seeing your material in stores and seeing it in restaurants and on magazine racks, as opposed to just exclusively in comic-book shops. There's something very special about getting to the mass public. And then you see it on TV in between LOIS AND CLARK and MURDER, SHE WROTE, or what-have-you. That's an exciting thing. It really is! I drew that, and all the viewers are seeing that. And of course, it's one of those very recognizable products that you can hold up and they go, "Oh, my kids have that."

And there's nothing like seeing your work in the parking lot of McDonald's smashed flat by a tractor-trailer truck. That's also a nice thing.

SANDRA: *It reminds you not to get too puffed up.*

AL: There you go! That's it!

SANDRA: *I loved those boxes when they came out. We could never save them long enough to build the city to let them all roll around on, because the kids would play with them too much. But they were great!*

So, we've touched on POWER RANGERS and BATMAN — what other projects have you got in mind or cooking on the fire?

AL: Well, I do a great deal of freelance work, which means I'm approached about doing various things and you never know what's going to happen from month to month. I do a lot of work for Children's Television Workshop.

SANDRA: *Ooh — SESAME STREET people!*

AL: Right — and they do a show called CRO — not the **Jim O'Barr** CROW. It's about a young, primitive boy back in caveman times, and of course he interacts with dinosaurs and whatnot. But invents the wheel, so to speak, every episode. He comes up with various things that display how gears work, how boats work — how they can float, buoyancy and whatnot — how airplanes work — by creating very primitive versions of these things. CTW has me do a great deal of work for CRO for posters or comic books that will be

Another caricature of Al, Allyson & Dolan. This one is by critic R.C. Harvey.

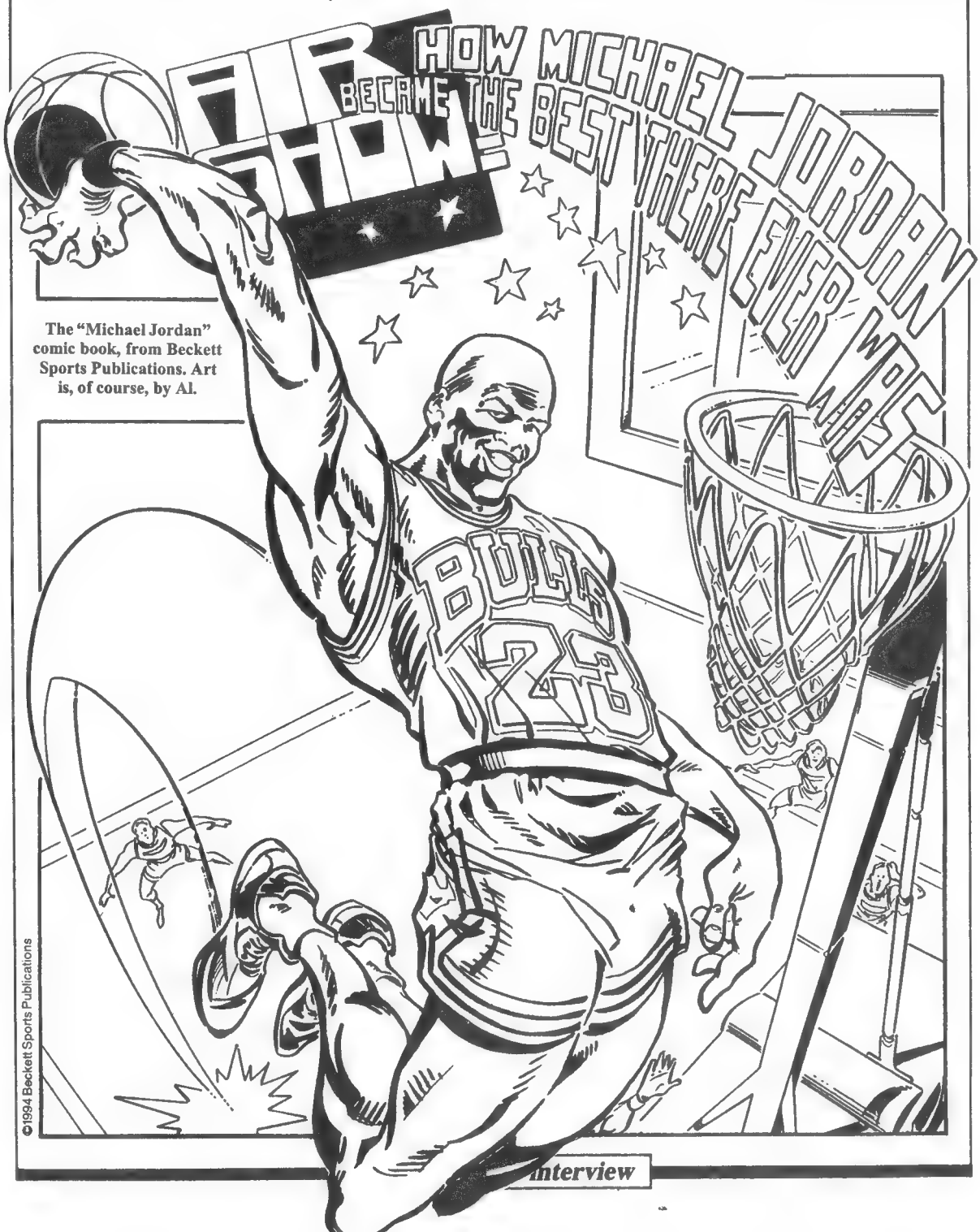
"When I show a character surprised, he's got the

inserted inside other magazines or other material from that group. And I've also done, for CTW, a great deal of work on GHOST WRITER, the PBS show where —

SANDRA: *The ghost writes on the computer screen.*

AL: Right. It's a spirit of some kind, that communicates through the written word, encouraging kids to read. And those are very interesting projects because, again, I had to capture the likenesses of the actors. I had various videotapes of the show and whatnot. I brought a comic-book sensibility to that. Because all this non-comics stuff I do, it's coming from a guy that was raised on comic books. So when I show a character in a surprised position, for example, he's got the **Jack Kirby/John Buscema/Neal Adams** kind of take on that gesture. My clients don't mind, because apparently that's exactly what they want.

Getting back to GHOST WRITER, it was a great deal of fun. I've done mark-and-sees and posters. I can go for a more realistic approach, because we're trying



The "Michael Jordan" comic book, from Beckett Sports Publications. Art is, of course, by Al.

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Kirby/Buscema/Adams kind of take on that gesture."

to match characters that are real as opposed to animated or exaggerated, like with the Power Rangers.

I also do sports comics for the Beckett people, who are the leading sports guide and sports magazine publisher. I spoke with them at San Diego last year, at the big convention, and my editor at Beckett came up with the idea of putting comics in their Beckett Tribute Series. That's a series where they find one athlete and spotlight him, for example **Michael Jordan,** which I did a comic for, and **Shaquille O'Neal,** and most recently **Emmitt Smith.** They're all computer-colored, and they're right there in a real glossy magazine, which is a great deal of fun.

It's a challenge because I'm not sports-oriented; I'm not a sports fan. It's one thing to do **Michael Jordan** — we've all

"I'm kicking around ideas for my own characters."

seen Michael; we know exactly what he looks like. But when they talk about **Emmitt Smith,** and all I have is a handful of photos and don't know a great deal about his personality, it becomes a challenge. Some of these sports stories are a great deal of fun, in the sense that the **Shaquille O'Neal** story, for example, was very overblown, with Shaquille almost, like, a major superhero who's on his way to making a commercial, on his way to a taping, on his way to the big game. And he's having these bigger-than-life events occur during his day. And you can play it as kind of a spoofy take on the whole thing, whereas others were a little more serious.

So that's really it. POWER RANGERS are in my future. I'm also kicking around a lot of ideas for my own characters and self-publishing. My friend, **Terry Collins,** who is writing a great deal for Marvel Comics — he wrote the CONEHEADS limited series and has a few REN & STIMPYs in the works, and does a great deal of work for DC on their foreign LOONEY TUNES line — we've got quite a few superhero things cooking and hope to get that off the ground in '95 or '96.

And I guess that's it. Just trying to take it day-by-day. I draw and take care of my new son, Dolan, who is four months old right now, and that's a big challenge.

SANDRA: *So you're a stay-at-home Dad!*

AL: Exactly. Until he gets big enough, until he can get into situations that require my full attention,

SANDRA: *Is that common in the art industry? The stay-at-home dad?*

AL: I really don't know. The trend these days is to have a studio, where you consolidate your various assets and you've got maybe five guys paying to keep the lights on. Of course, that makes financial sense. I haven't heard of it very often, and that may be quite limited to the extent that once baby gets a little more than I can handle I'll need some kind of help to put in the eight hours I need to put in on my regular comic or what-have-you.

I'd like to do in the future more BATMAN animated material, but I don't know how limited that will be, since the show appears to have gone off except for the Saturday morning BATMAN AND ROBIN show. And then there's always the wave of the live-action BATMAN movies, which brings in a great deal of merchandise at DC, and they contact me about some of that every now and again.

SANDRA: *Well, we had heard there were going to be more BATMAN animated direct-to-video movies, like MASK OF THE PHANTASM.*

AL: MASK OF THE PHANTASM did quite well. It stayed on that video purchase chart for a great many weeks. I don't know exactly how many, but it just seemed to hang in there. It plays like a movie, but didn't do too well in the movie houses. But if you think cartoons, outside of the Disney stable, they've never done that well. I still remember people to this

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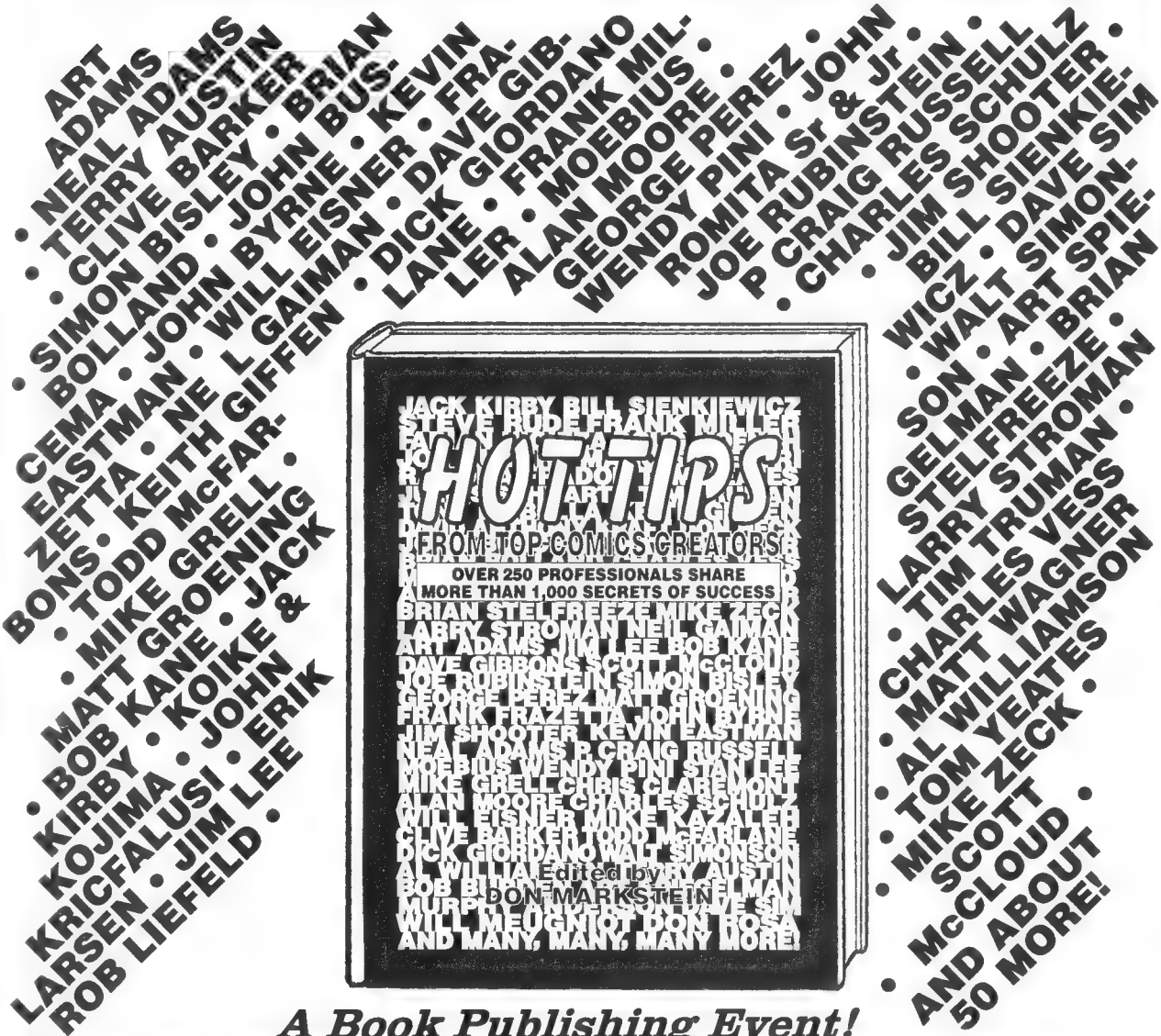
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"I got to do Batman and Robin in traditional situations."

day bypassing the HEAVY METAL movie simply because it was a cartoon. I remember them saying, "Oh my gosh, it's an R-rated cartoon! Who would ever have thought of such a thing?" And even though I was maybe 15 or 16 when that came out, I remember rolling my eyes, thinking, "Haven't we made more progress than this?"

But you're right. People thought it was a kids' type of thing. I did a great deal of that style guide, maybe 3/4 of their style guide for that movie, somehow it didn't strike me that the character of Phantasm was strange in any way. And then I saw the HBO preview they did for the movie, and somehow, right then and there I figured out that this character was a female. And it made sense because when you see the actual shape of the Phantasm figure it's very slender and curvy.

SANDRA: *But it's still a surprise to the average viewer, it's still a surprise.*

AL: Right. And that's a credit to the original designer of Phantasm, which I guess maybe was **Bruce Timm;** I'm not quite sure — **Bruce Timm** and his animators — that they could pull that off and still keep you guessing.

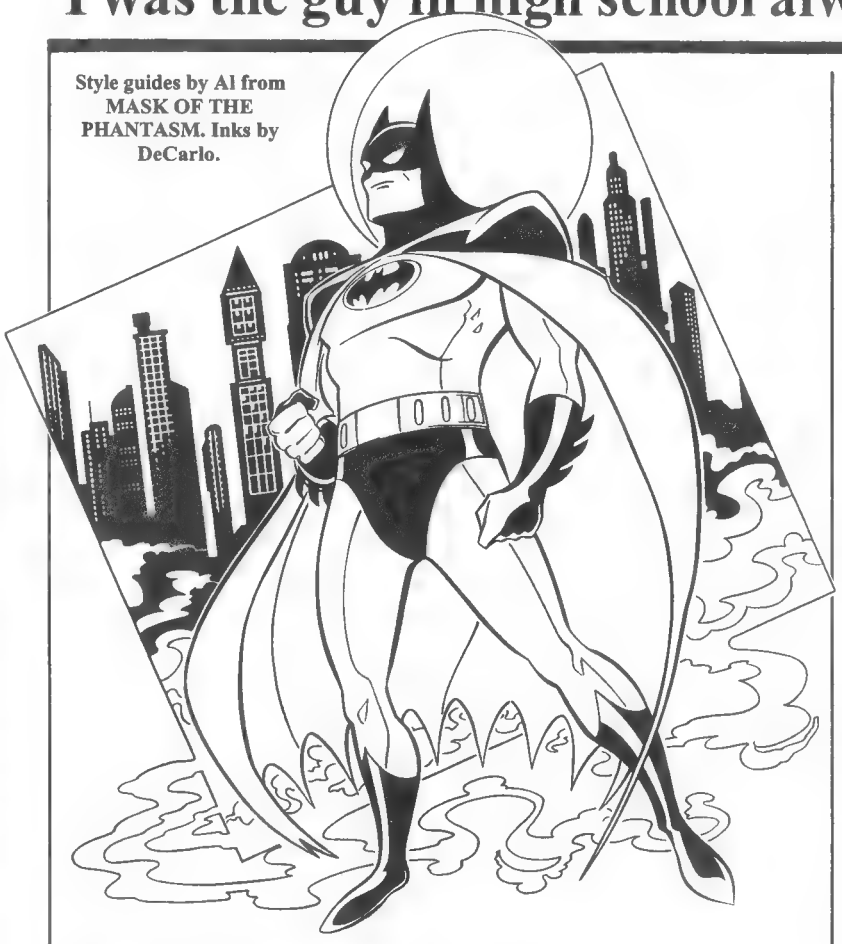
But that style guide was a great deal of fun, because again, I'm seeing that work on posters and wrapping paper and everything. I'd love to do the Kenner action figure box art, because I find that very very impressive, on the header card to the action figures. But I don't know how it works up there.

SANDRA: *Maybe somebody will read this, and they'll call you.*

AL: One of the most interesting recent things I've done is, a T-shirt manufacturer issued some custom designs featuring Batman and Robin. Apparently, they were finding out that material sold better with Batman and Robin together. Imagine that! *(Laughter.)* So I got to do these great designs with Batman and Robin together, in traditional situations —

Bigley's illustrations for the many activity books produced by Golden Books. This one: MORPH INTO MATH.

"I was the guy in high school always a few steps



Style guides by Al from MASK OF THE PHANTASM. Inks by DeCarlo.

swinging into action against the Joker and Penguin and they're on the Bat Boat stopping the Riddler and all that. I got to work with **Nate Butler** as my inker, which was wonderful, because he did wonderful work over my pencils and it's always great to find another inker that you like because as egotistical or as hard-headed as it sounds, as a penciller you can count on one hand, probably, the inkers that you like on your work. And that's not saying the inkers are bad. It's just —

SANDRA: *You had a different vision.*

AL: Right. It doesn't translate, sometimes.

I've done some work for Marvel in the past. I did some fill-in issues of DARKHOLD. I did an AVENGERS WEST COAST ANNUAL piece featuring Scarlet Witch, a DARK HAWK ANNUAL, and a few issues, I think #26 and #27, some back-up stories, and some Iron Man pin-ups that haven't appeared. For a while there, I was getting all kinds of work for Marvel. That dried up. You've got to keep on the ball and send out your samples. I find I get so sidetracked with projects that that takes all my attention. You kind of slip through the holes sometimes.

SANDRA: *You get out of the loop.*

AL: Exactly.

SANDRA: *How did you get your training? How did you start?*

AL: I've always drawn, since I was young. I began reading comics in the early '70s, at the age of 5 or 6. Batman really did it for me. A lot of the other characters just didn't take until I saw Batman. Coming up as a lad, I drew. My big influences were **Neal Adams** and **Ross Andru** and **Nick Cardy** and **John Romita Sr.** I was the guy in high school and junior high that was always a few steps ahead of the other kids in painting and drawing and whatnot. Somewhere in my high school years my art teacher told me about the Ringling School of Art and Design, which is a school originated by **John Ringling** of Ringling Brothers Circus. They have their museum down in Sarasota, Florida, and that's where the circus goes also during the off-season. And that's where the school was. I applied to the school and later found out that **Mike Zeck** is an alumnus. I think he went in the early '70s. The year that I went, '83, late '83 I was starting, **Rafael Kayanan** was just leaving to do FIRESTORM for DC Comics. In fact, I saw him frequently on campus. Other people include **Mark Bagley.** He went in the late '70s. And a lot of this, you don't even know, because the school is not a comic-oriented school.

I majored in illustration, just wanting the full package. I wanted more. And I knew sitting and drawing in figure class for 10 hours a week was going to give me the skills I needed for comics, plus other things I could use if I ever got into other fields.

More recent alumni include **Mike White,** who has done a lot of inking for DC; **Eric Hope,** who is doing a lot of fantasy work now, work in various fantasy and painting fields. For a while there, there was a small corps of us that were into comics at the school and were excited that we had people like **Mike Zeck** to point to, because at that time **Zeck** was doing things like CAPTAIN AMERICA and SECRET WARS for Marvel. He lived in Florida.

I went there for the whole three years — it was a three-year curriculum, and I took, as I said, figure classes — it would be incredible amounts of hours a week. Sometimes it would be me and the model left alone after everybody had left for the

ahead of the others in painting a[illegible]d drawing."

beach. A very strange scene. We'd be chatting away about television, or political events or current events, and I'm drawing this model. And I took the various photography courses and painting courses and whatnot. An interesting side note is, **Don Maitz** came in as a teacher during my last year there. I think he's still there; I could be wrong. And he's a very well-known fantasy painter, with several books to his credit.

Then I got out of school and made my way back toward North Carolina, and eventually wound up in Charlotte — which was exciting because every year there was the big "Heroes Aren't Hard to Find" convention, called the Heroes Con, put on by **Shelton Drumm.** And that was attracting more and more big names in comics and getting bigger. Now, it's one of the major conventions. And I'd get to see various people I had contacted and tried to get into the business through. I was still doing a great many samples, just being out of school and trying to break into comics. And one of the first people that showed an interest was actually COMICS INTERVIEW publisher **David Anthony Kraft.** He was doing SOUTHERN KNIGHTS at the time. I was trying out for that book. He politely refused me;

and of course, looking back now, he gave me a lot of good advice and steered me in a lot of directions I needed to go in or look at.

Eventually, I came to the attention of the people at First Comics, in 1988. I did a BADGER back-up, and three issues of SABLE, and also some covers for Quality Comics. They were doing the English reprints over here of ZENITH and STRONTIUM DOG and JUDGE DREDD and whatnot. I did a handful of covers for them. I got to meet inside people like **Mark McKenna** and **E.R. Cruz** and a few folks like that. It was quiet for a while until **Joe Orlando** called me in 1990 to do this DC special projects work. And that kind of snowballed into other things in comics, like a few issues of THE FLY for **Paul Kupperberg** over at DC, and the Marvel work I mentioned, which was a great deal of fun.

But basically, I guess because I'd never tried to adapt my style for this new look, this new aggressive Image style type of look — which might be bad or might be good, as far as your outlook is concerned — so I guess I never made any inroads. Because if you look at the stands, that's the kind of work that they're going after and that's the kind of people they're hiring. So in that sense, I kind of some-

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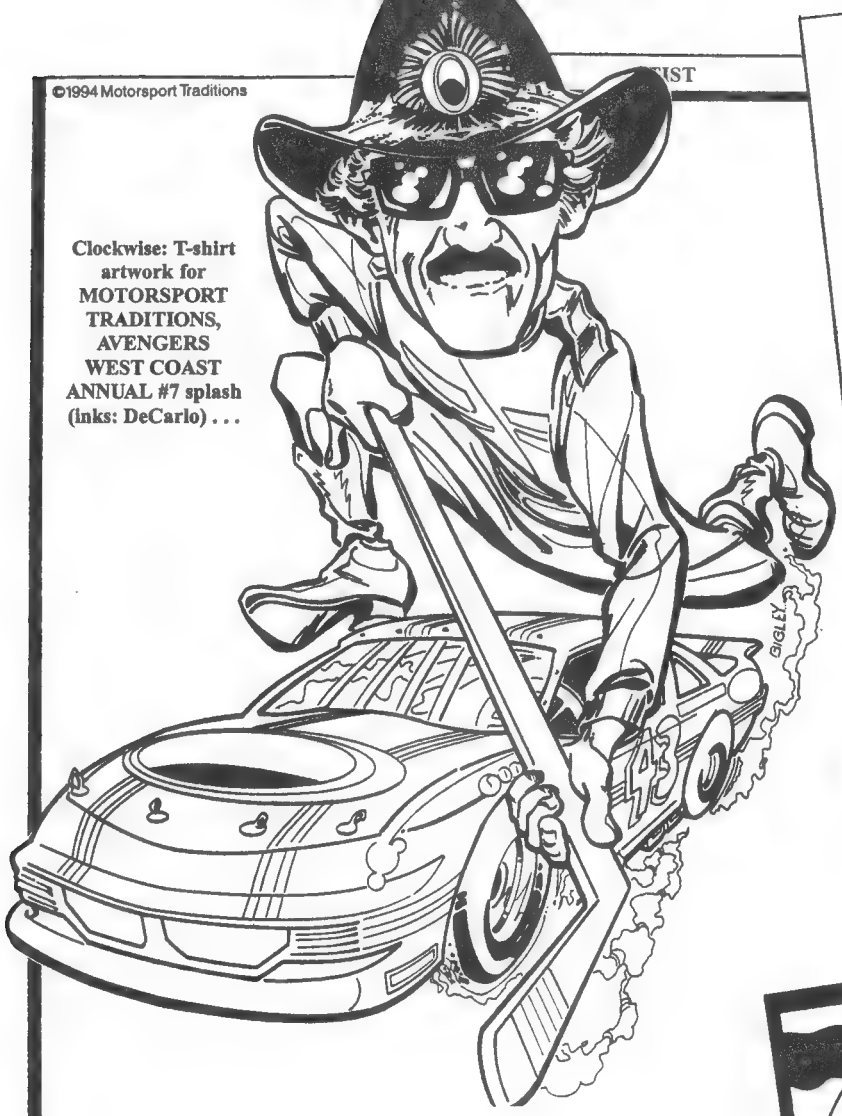
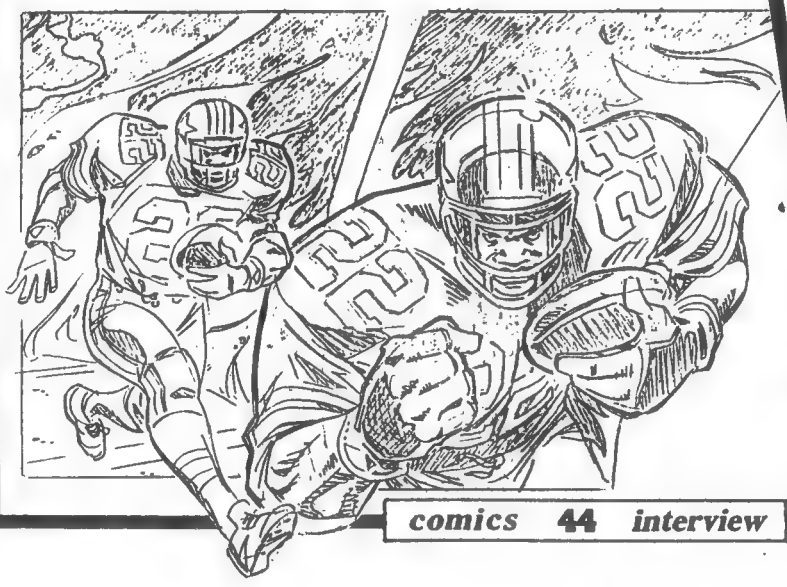


Clockwise: T-shirt artwork for MOTORSPORT TRADITIONS, AVENGERS WEST COAST ANNUAL #7 splash (inks: DeCarlo) . . .

. . . Majestic's COMIC BOOK FUTURESTARS card set art (inks: Dan Schaeffer), Golden Books' MORPH INTO SPELLING activity book, MASK OF THE PHANTASM style guide "Batman" sheet, and EMMITT from the Beckett Tribute Series. All this stuff is by Al! This dude does it all — and then some!



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IN
SCARLET
ROY THOMAS
WRITER
MIKE DECARLO
INKER
AL BIGLEY
PENCILER
SUSAN CRESPI
LETTERER
ATY COCKRUM
COLORIST
PULL!
©1994 Majestic (COMIC-BOOK FUTURESTARS)
BIGLEY / DVS

"Draw people. Real people. That's so important. I

how drifted from comics into the advertising work, or the commercial artwork, I guess you'd call it — doing things for Children's Television Workshop and Golden Books and Beckett and National Geographic World, and all these other outfits. Which is interesting because again, I was just the guy who was going to grow up and draw THE HULK or something all his life. And somehow I found myself drifting into these other areas.

And to be honest, part of it was a feeling that I was having too many doors slammed on me in the comics. And that happens, and that's a fact of life — but it really is something to go to these other outfits where you're dealing with art directors who have 10, 20, 30 years of experience and they treat you like you're a godsend to them. That really is a boost to your ego and it really gives you the backbone and the self-confidence to know that any type of problem in getting work in comics is not because of deficiencies in your work. It's not based on that. It's all politics, or it's just you truly were not right for the job at the time, or not what the editor was looking for.

I think a lot of young people starting out in comics, they really take it hard, that "Maybe I'm just no good. I'm getting the door slammed in my face, and maybe my work just has no merit of any type." And of course, that's not a way to go. With all these editors looking for this one style, if you draw in any other way, possibly that's the reason you're not getting any work.

I guess that brings us full circle.

SANDRA: *So what is your advice to the young artist who is 12, 13 years old and he loves to draw and he's not sure what to do and he comes to you at a convention and he says, "Mr. Bigley, I want to do what you do."*

AL: At conventions, I'm shown a great deal of work from both young and old people that is slanted toward the Image style that's prevalent today. And it's a bit distressing because that style may be gone in ten years, and what are these people going to do? It sounds dreadful to say, but that's not a style that teaches you other things. It does not teach you proper anatomy and the basics to fall back on — as opposed to the people who came up copying **Kirby** and **Neal Adams**. At least they probably learned how to draw faces

More Morphin artwork by Al Bigley, all from Golden Books activity publications. Al: "It's

could draw Wolverine until the cows come home."

very rewarding knowing young people are getting something out of these."

somewhere along the line.

' I tell them to just get a well-rounded education. Go your library; see what's available. Draw all the time, which is about the best advice you can give anybody. If I could do anything differently, I'd somehow find more time in my past to fit in more drawing. I don't know where I'd do it, but I would. *(Laughter.)*

Draw people. Draw real people. That's so important. One of the things that get me excited as an artist now is when I draw somebody in a business suit. Or I draw somebody wearing real clothing and make it look authentic. I mean, I could draw Wolverine until the cows come home. That's nothing. But can you draw somebody in a sweatshirt, and make it look different from somebody wearing a business jacket? Can you draw sneakers, and make it look different from wing tips?

And that sounds so silly — because today's comics are more action-oriented. But that's what I look for when I look back on my old idols, is how they handled real faces and real clothing and real settings — as opposed to the slam-bang action and the over-the-top activity of the characters.

And I often get asked about where to go for an education. I did not go to the **Kubert** school, because I wanted that more well-rounded thing to fall back on — although now I hear the **Kubert** school has a great deal of courses to offer. Besides comics and animation there's a much more broad education there. I tell kids to go to their guidance counselors, or just go to the library. Again, do the research to see what kind of schools are available. Just don't be afraid to look at other influences. Go ahead and look at people from the past, and look at influences that are outside of comics. Look at **Norman Rockwell,** for example, or look at the Renaissance painters — as far as gesture, and body language, and facial structure.

Another thing I tell them is, at conventions, don't be afraid to show their work, because it is intimidating. Now, we're in the age of these mega-shows, where even editors are being asked for autographs. And these poor young people starting out are seeing that, and they get a little intimidated. I just try to express to them, don't be upset if you get a bad review. Show it to as many people as you can, because that's how you get feedback and that's how you learn.

SANDRA: *Just keep trying.*

AL: Exactly. Just keep trying and just never quit, no matter what anybody tells you. If you've got the drive and the energy, you can make it happen.

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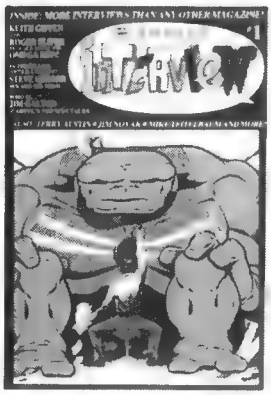

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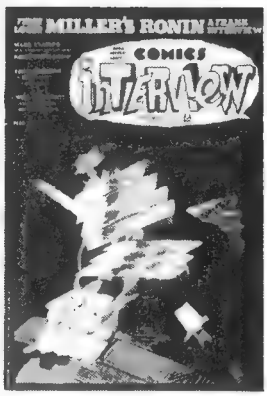

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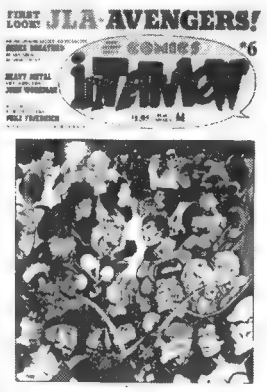

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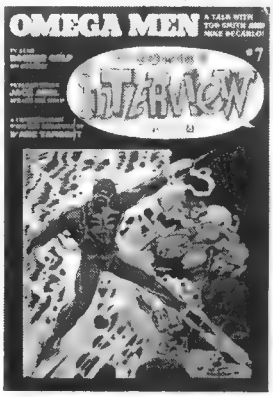

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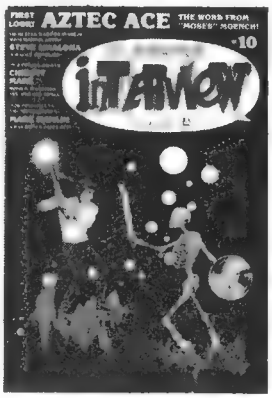

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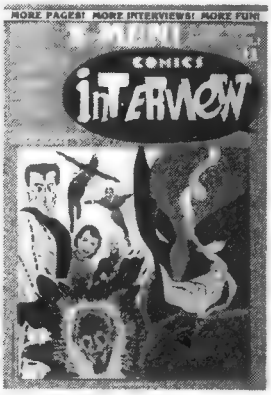

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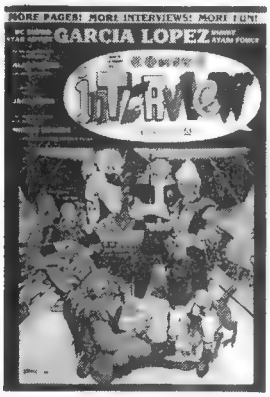

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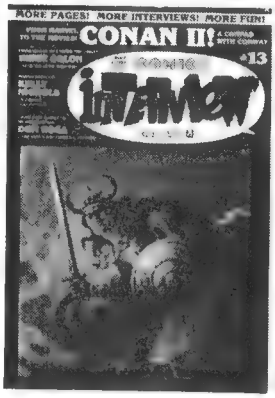

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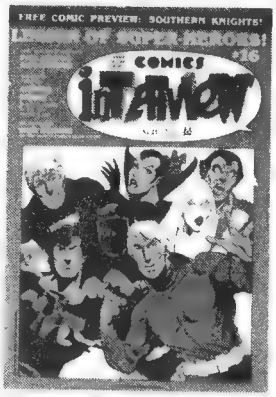

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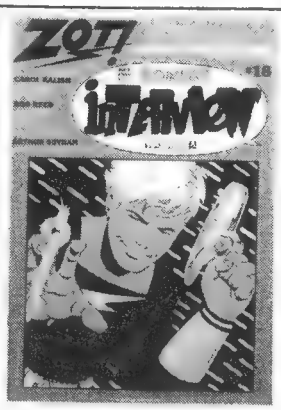

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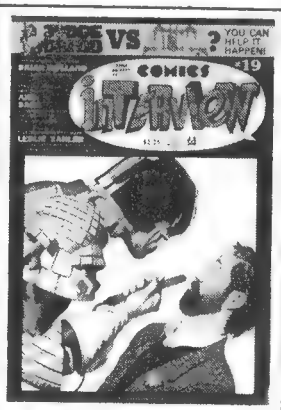

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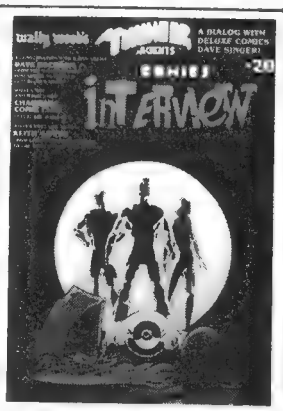

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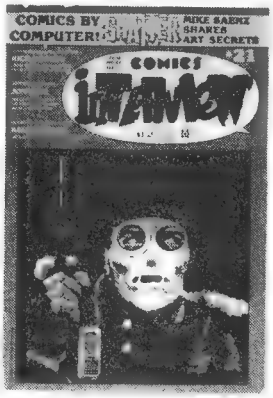

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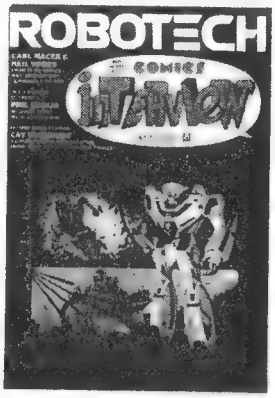

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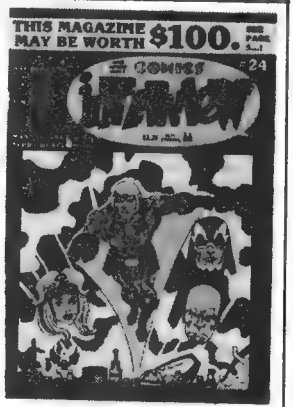

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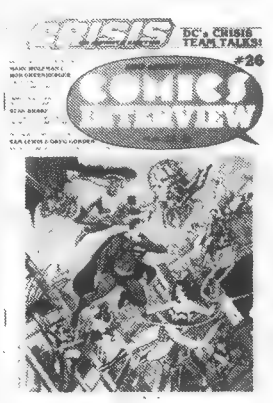

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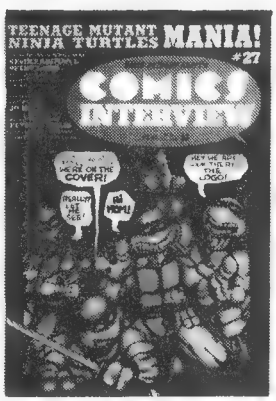

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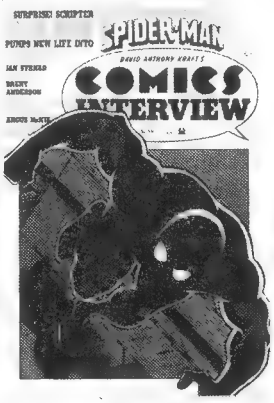

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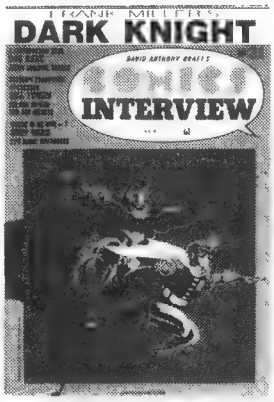

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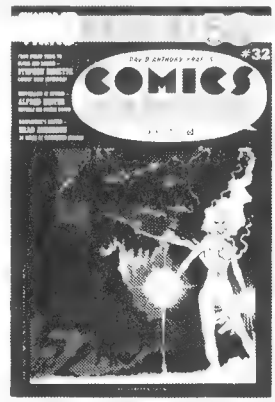

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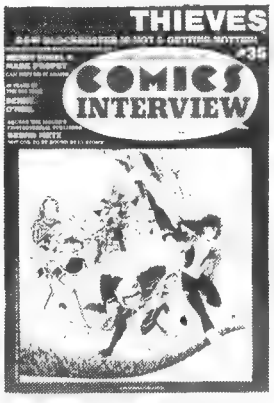

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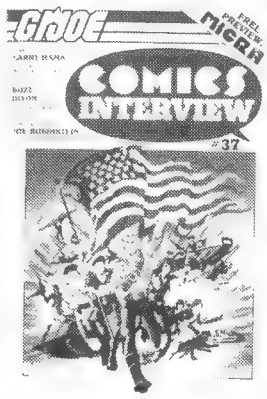

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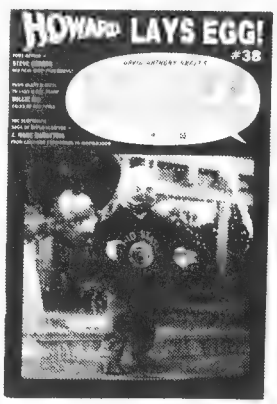

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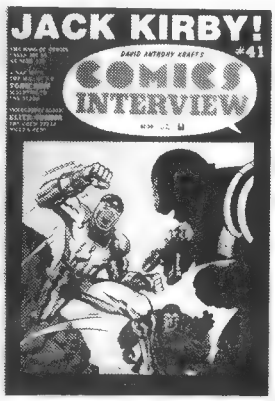

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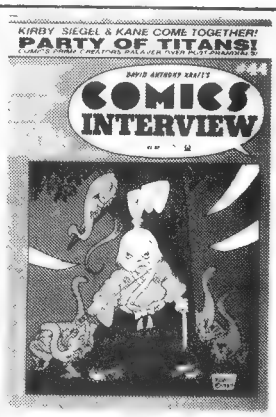

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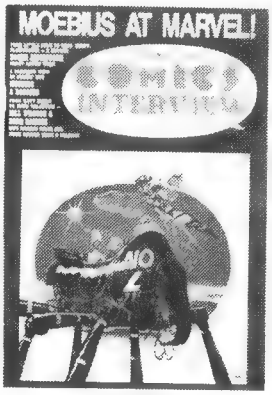

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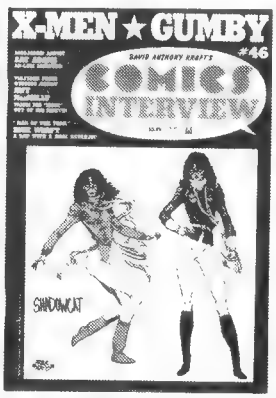

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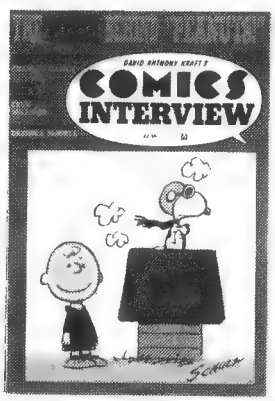

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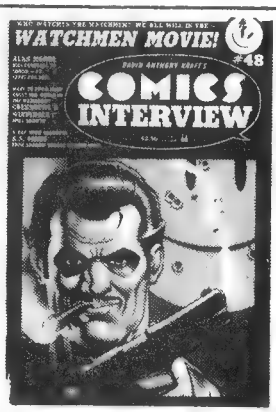

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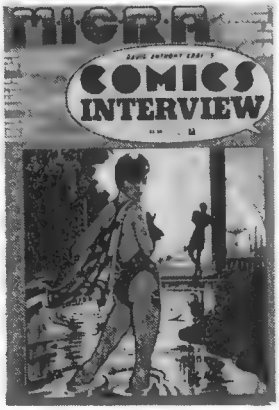

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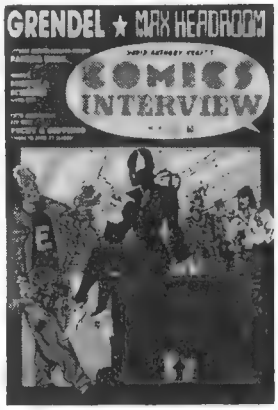

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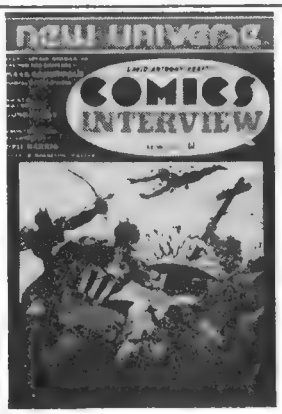

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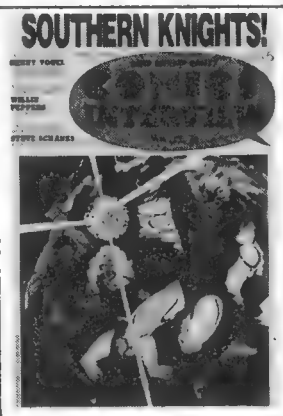

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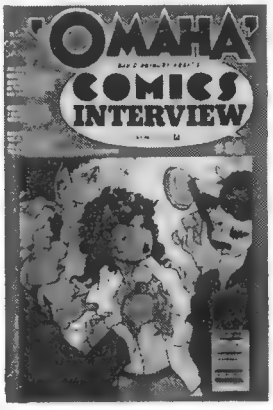

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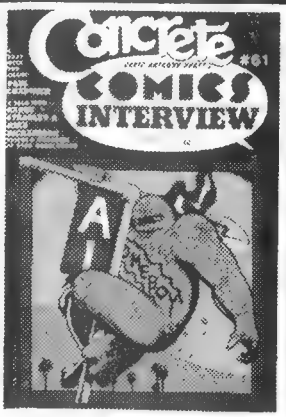

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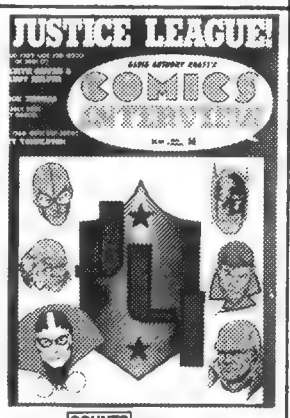

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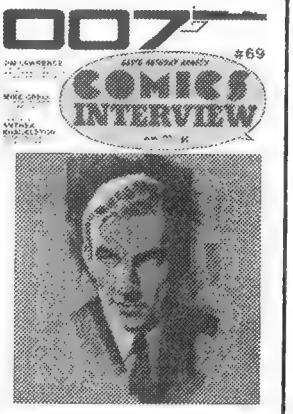

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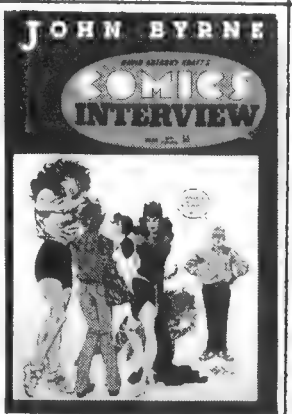

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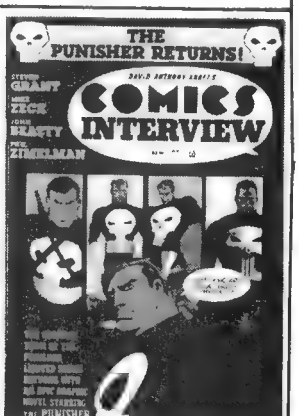

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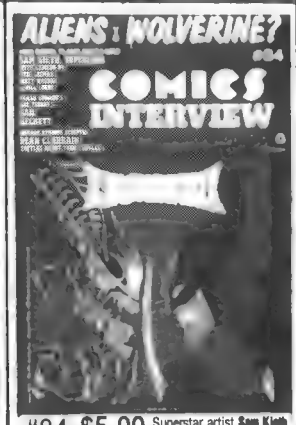

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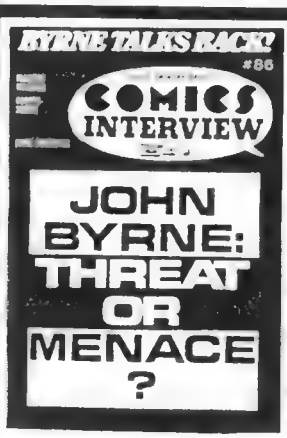

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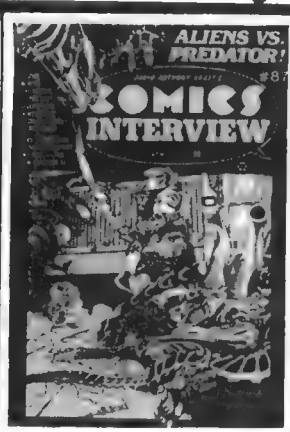

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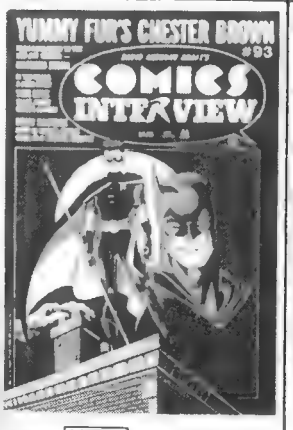

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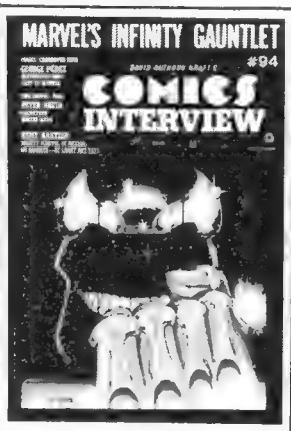

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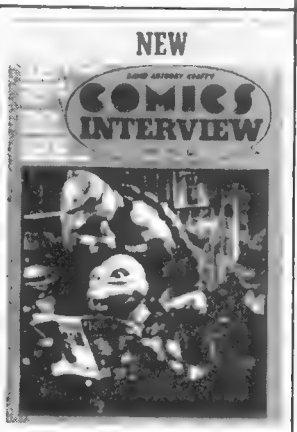

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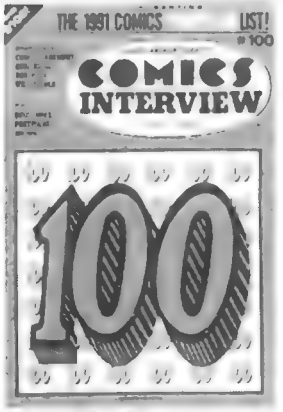

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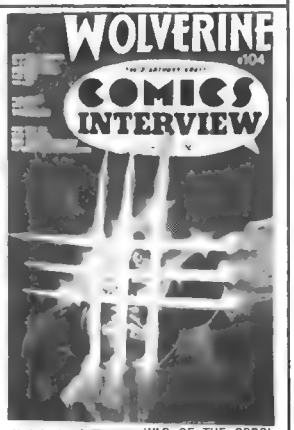

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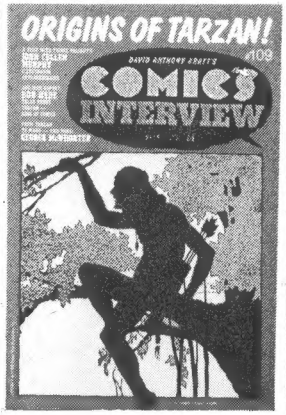

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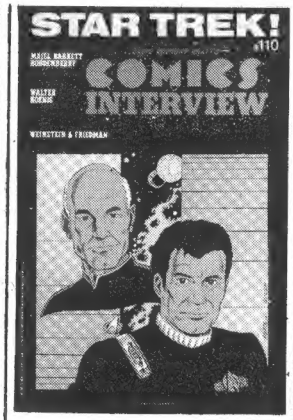

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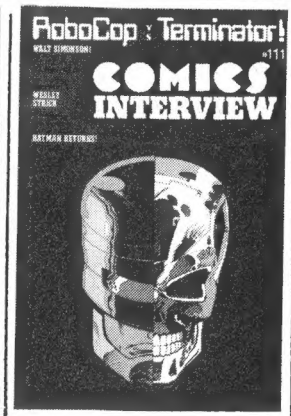

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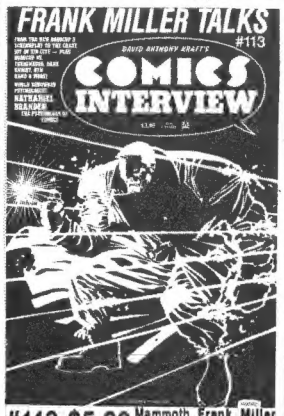

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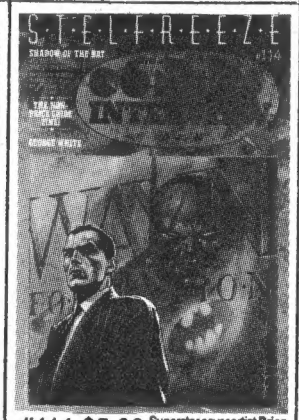

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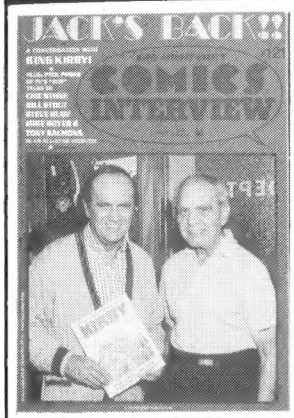

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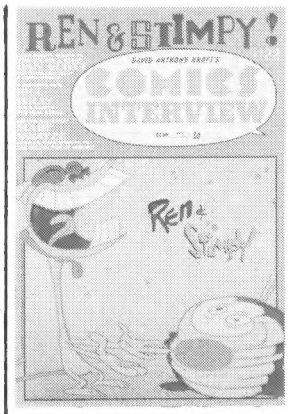

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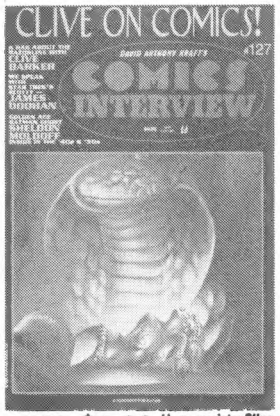

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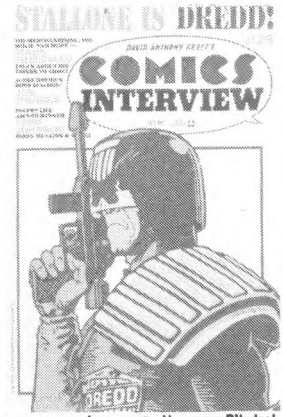

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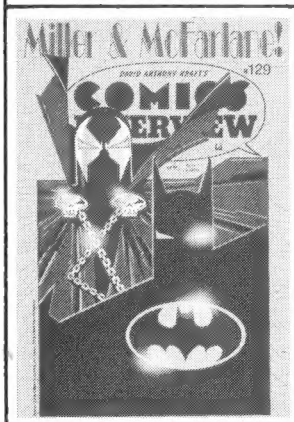

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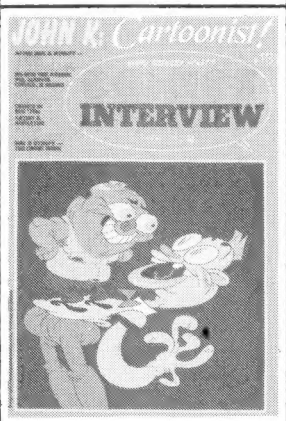

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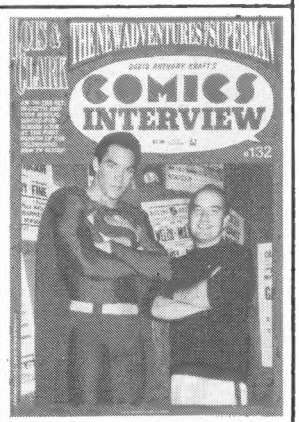

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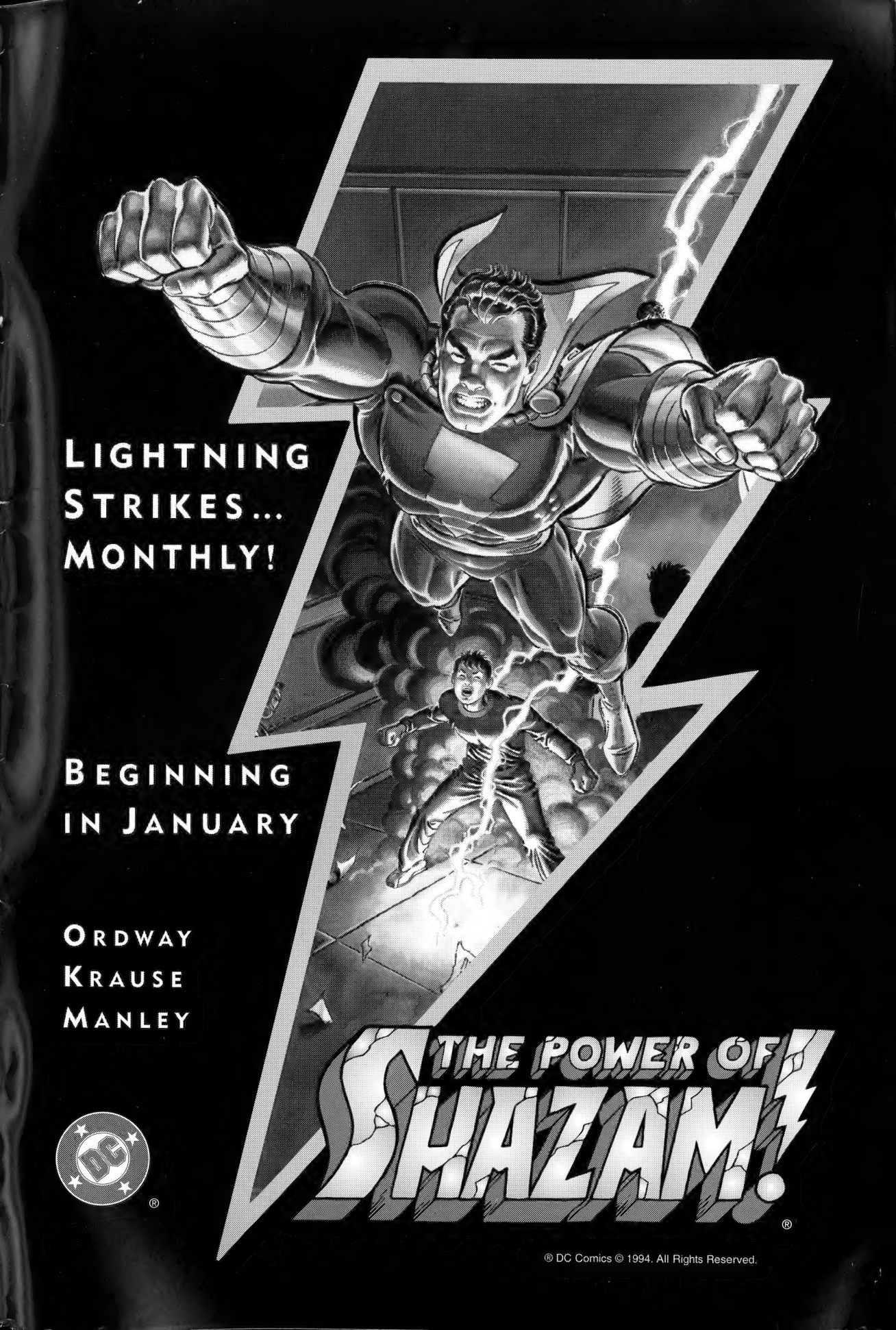

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